RISE OF THE PESHWAS

SINHA

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BY

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ALLAHABAD:
THE INDIAN PRESS, LTD.
1931

Printed and Published by K. Mittra at
The Indian Press Ltd., Allahabad.

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TO

MANI

DEDICATED WITH LOVE

PREFACE

THIS Volume is the first of a series which, as I have planned, will be completed in three Volumes, and will trace the rise, decline and fall of the Peshwas. The present Volume traces the rise of the Peshwas, and goes on up to the year 1752. The whole story is one of the most fascinating in Indian History though there is a tragic touch towards its end. An obscure family rising to sovereign power, and swaying the destiny of more than half of India is certainly not an ordinary phenomenon, and when we know that the empire of India was the ultimate prize for which the Marathas and the English fought for more than a quarter of a century, the significance of the story increases immensely. I do not profess that I am the first man to attempt its narration. Far from it. It is even to-day fresh in the memory of the Maratha people, and is narrated every evening in Maratha households. The generosity of Shahu, the prowess of Baji Rao, the disaster of Panipat, these and many more have already passed into the treasury of national lore. For me to repeat the story, therefore, is only a matter of intellectual delight. Nothing else has prompted me to the task, however arduous it may be.

It is after a long delay that the book is out of the press. It should have been in the hands of the readers at least a year before. Several chapters have already appeared in the Journal of Indian History between 1928 and 1930. But for the encouragement that I received from a number of friendly scholars notably Dr. S. K. Aiyangar and Mr. G. S. Sardesai, I would not have ventured to publish it in the form of a book. Fortunately the Indian Press, Allahabad, came to my rescue, and took upon themselves the whole cost of publication. Now, as I send the last batch of proofs to the press, I am overpowered by a mingled feeling of joy and apprehension—joy to think that I have been able to put my own interpretation of one of the most splendid phenomena of Indian History before all, and apprehension to think that it has yet to stand the test of scholarly criticism.

This brings me to an important factor in the production of the work. The writing of the book was started under most

depressing circumstances, with the single hope that the mental and vocational worries which harassed me then might be forgotten in the pure intellectual absorption, and I am happy to think that the hope has been realized. Further in a place like this one cannot hope to have facilities for research work, and when that is combined with more than twenty periods of college work, a week, one can be generous enough to make some allowance for the imperfections here and there. That it has been written at the comparative immature age of twentyseven, is no apology. I rather regret that I did not wait for another three years, and take advantage of the latest pamphlets, embodying the selections from the Poona Daftar by Mr. G. S. Sardesai. That is a drawback which I hope to get over in the future. I think I have drawn upon all other sources of information on the subject. Whether the work is commended or censured by competent scholars, it has been a source of happiness to me at a time when all around me was dark and desolate. That alone, more than money and reputation, is an adequate return for all my labour.

I take this opportunity of thanking a number of friends and gentlemen who have helped me in the production of this book. Words cannot express my indebtedness to Dr. S. N. Sen of Calcutta University and Dr. S. K. Aiyangar, then of Madras University. Mr. Madkholkar of "the Maharastra" Nagpur, Mr. Behere, the wellknown Marathi writer and Headmaster, Patwardhan High School, Nagpur, Prof. Mirashi and Prof. Banhatti, both my colleagues, have rendered immense help to me one way or another, and I offer my warmest thanks to them all. One of my best students in History and now my friend Miss N. S. Kotval, B.A. has very kindly drawn all the maps and read a part of the proofs. My sincere thanks to her also. Lastly I convey hereby my gratitude to the Bombay Government for giving me free access to their records pertaining to the period dealt with in this book.

MORRIS COLLEGE
NAGPUR.
20th July, 1931.

H. N. SINHA

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I

MAHARASTRA BEFORE 1707—A SURVEY OF THE SITUATION

A LITTLE more than a century intervenes between the battle of Talikota (more correctly Rakshasatangadi) and the death of Shivaji. It is a period of conflict in the annals of the Deccan—conflict among the local Sultanates, between the local Sultanates and the expanding Mughal Empire, between all these and the Marathas. Of the five Sultanates that arose out of the ruins of the Bahamani Empire, three were more powerful than the other two. The northernmost of these was crippled by Akbar at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and was annihilated by Shahjahan in the second quarter of it (1636). When the Mughal menace reached its climax, the remaining Sultanates of Golconda and Bijapur were fast falling into decay, and the nascent state of Shivaji was rising to be a factor in Deccan politics. These years, between 1565 and 1680, therefore witnessed unforeseen changes in the Deccan—the decay of the old states, the advent of a new power, and the rise of a hitherto unknown people. The first was marked by court intrigues and partisan bloodshed, and consequently by corruption in the government ; the militant nature of the second filled the land with all the horrors of war—rapine and pillage, famine and pestilence ; and the third was marked by that great outburst of the latent energy of the Marathas, which surprised the neighbouring powers. Such were the main features of the Deccan politics at the death of Shivaji.

But the death of Shivaji opened up fields for fiercer conflicts. In 1681 the flight of Prince Akbar to the Court of Sambhaji drew in the concentrated strength of the Mughal Empire upon the Deccan ; and Aurangzeb in grim determination set forth to destroy the last Shiah states, to reduce the

Marathas, and to reclaim his rebellious son to allegiance. To this three-fold task he devoted the last and therefore the maturest period of his life. He deluged the country in blood; destroyed all the peaceful pursuits of life; drained Hindustan of its men and money; and yet he failed miserably to achieve his purpose. More disastrous than his failure was the condition of the Deccan at his death. Already in the throes of an exterminating war for more than a century, it was subject to the most awful calamities for another quarter of a century. Vast armies in marches and counter-marches, foraging parties of Maratha horsemen, disbanded troops of Golconda and Bijapur, the huge imperial cortege, the moving colonies of Banjaras and the freelance Afghans, who always kept at the tail of the army or imperial cortege—all these preyed constantly on the land and left it desolate when they had moved away. They always left behind them "fields. . . devoid of trees and bare of crops, their place being taken by the bones of men and beasts. Instead of verdure all is blank and barren. The country is so entirely desolated and depopulated that neither fire nor light could be found in the course of a three or four days' journey. . . . . . There have died in his (Aurangzeb's) armies over a hundred thousand souls yearly, and of animal, pack-oxen, camels, elephants, etc., over three hundred thousand. . . In the Deccan provinces from 1702 to 1704 plague prevailed. In these two years there expired over two millions of souls." So did describe Manucci as an eye-witness, to the condition of the Deccan, during the disastrous warfare of Aurangzeb. Indeed the economic waste was beyond all comprehension.

Even more grievous was the political effect of these wars on the Deccan. Aurangzeb himself was apprehensive from the beginning lest his continued warfare should foster a spirit of lawlessness among his subjects, and rightly enough as Professor Sarkar remarks, 'a great anarchy began in the Empire of Delhi even before Aurangzeb had closed his eyes,' and in the Deccan 'the Mughal administration had really dissolved.' Aurangzeb's officers were unable to check the Maratha activities because they never got timely aid from their master. On the other hand they were chastised because they could not cope with the Marathas. Often they were required to make good the losses of the people, who had been looted by the Marathas.

Indeed it was a difficult dilemma in which these unhappy Mughal officers were placed. Hence they chose rather "to bribe the Marathas than to fight them." Thus they paid the Chauth to the Marathas unknown to their master. They even made common cause with the Marathas and enriched themselves by robbing the Emperor's own subjects. Such was the condition of the Mughal administration of the Deccan. It inspired not trust, but terror in the people.

The Maratha state suffered no less than the Mughal government. Invertebrate, and still in its infancy, it could not stand the shock of these wars. The first shock came when Sambhaji was executed in 1689. By that time Aurangzeb had destroyed the Deccan Sultanates, and the reduction of the Marathas, now that their king was dead, was he thought only a question of time. Never were human expectations more sadly disappointed. Sambhaji's execution was only a prologue to a long drama—a dark tragedy. It was not only a crime, but a blunder. Far from striking terror into the heart of the Marathas, or disarming them as he expected by the execution of Sambhaji, he had stirred them to a sense of national crisis. Rajaram was taken out of the prison, and amidst sullen resentment raised to the throne. In consultation with the Astapradhan a policy of decentralization of authority was decided upon, and Rajaram retired to Jinji leaving Maharastra proper in charge of Ramachandra Bavdekar, *Hukumatpanah*. This shifted the centre of gravity from Maharastra into the Karnatic, and while it did not allow the Mughals to concentrate, it opened up golden opportunities for the predatory warfare of the Marathas, who were considerably relieved of the pressure of the Mughals. The Maratha sardars went to the king at Jinji, and he gave them titles, army commands, and grants for the different districts where they were to go, loot the country, and impose the Chauth. Thus Rajaram allowed the nation to rise in arms for its own defence and it succeeded admirably. In each parganah arose a chieftain who mustered to his standard a number of men commensurate with his ability, and carried on a guerilla warfare on his own account.

Uncontrolled by a central authority, uninfluenced by any higher motive than that of avenging the death of their king, the individual chieftains soon succumbed to cupidity, and the

service of the national cause was soon forgotten amidst the seductions of rich spoils. The distribution of territories was often disregarded by them and encroachments frequently ended in bloodshed. Nor were personal jealousy and ill-will wanting among the commanders of armies and ministers of the state. Parsram Trimbak and Ramachandra Bavdekar never liked each other ; Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav were ready to cut each other's throat.

The result was that the whole land was sown, as it were, with the dragon's teeth, and wherever the unwieldy Mughal armies turned they were molested and massacred, or left to starve. In 1699 Aurangzeb realized the hopelessness of the task he had set himself to achieve. 'A nation was now up in arms . . . against the officers of the emperor and the cause of law and order in general.'[1] ' . . . . The Maratha state servants supported themselves by plundering on all sides, and paying a small part of their booty to the king.'[2] So arose the dangerous tradition of plundering to maintain the state. The legacy of Shivaji—an admirable framework of civil government, was irretrievably lost. The Marathas failed to realize the magnitude of this loss. Revelling in disorder they welcomed the situation, because it was a means for their safety. They imperceptibly lapsed into ungovernable habits. The iron discipline of Shivaji gave place to unbridled lawlessness ; his salutary laws were flung to the winds ; and only 'a pride in the conquest of Shivaji '[3] remained to inspire the people with a greed for plunder. Such aspirations, such activities long continued to colour the Maratha national polity. They had their inceptions during the reign of Rajaram and yet he is not to blame. It was impossible to combat the situation in any other way. Perhaps the Fates conspired to draw Maharastra into the vortex of confusion.

In 1700 died Rajaram, and there arose three parties advocating the succession of three candidates—Shivaji, the son of Tara Bai ; Sambhaji, the son of Rajas Bai, both widows of Rajaram ; and Shahu, the son of Sambhaji, and a prisoner in

1 Sarkar's *Aurangzeb*, Vol. V, p. 11.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 238.
3 Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 352.

the imperial camp. It was after a hard struggle that Tara Bai got the better of her adversaries, and established her son on the throne. Thus the rule of the tyrant Sambhaji, and of the weak and fugitive Rajaram was succeeded by that of a minor under the regency of an ambitious woman. All the while civil government was a thing of the past. The Marathas were hard put to it to save their own skin ; they had no time or inclination to look to law and order. The scum of the society and the floating wrecks of Bijapur and Golconda armies combined into a mass of chaotic elements, and swept over the land. The Maratha leaders turned their activities to advantage ; and the destroyer of Golconda and Bijapur, and the murderer of Sambhaji had to face at once the fury of the Marathas and the hatred of the Deccani Muhammadans. Aurangzeb's mistaken policy was bearing fruit.

The tide turned against Aurangzeb in 1703, and be it said to the credit of Tara Bai, she was the soul of all Maratha activities. The Marathas were now masters of the situation and the Mughals were thrown on the defensive. With this change of situation came a change of tactics. They were no more light bodies of men, moving at a lightning speed, avoiding pitched battles and disappearing at the approach of the enemy. They had grown bold and conscious of their strength. As Manucci noticed in 1704, 'These (Maratha) leaders and their troops move in these days with much confidence ; because they have cowed the Mughal commanders and inspired them with fear. At the present time they possess artillery, musketry, bows and arrows, with elephants and camels for all their baggage and tents . . . they move like conquerors, showing no fear of any Mughal troops.'[4] Indeed with the consciousness of their strength, their incursions had gradually assumed wider dimensions. As far back as 1690 they raided the Dhurmapore parganah of Malwa, and inflicted a serious loss on the royal revenue. In 1694 they came again, and in 1698 Udaji Powar looted Mandabgarh.[5] In 1699 Krishnaji Sawant, a Maratha General at the head of 15,000 cavalry, crossed the Narmada and ravaged some places near Dhum-

[4] Sarkar's *Aurangzeb*, Vol. V, pp. 242-3.
[5] Malcolm's *Central India*, pp. 60-61.

mani and returned. In 1703 they raided up to the environs of Ujjain, and in October of the same year Nimaji Sindhia 'burst into Berar, defeated and captured Rustam Khan, the Deputy Governor of the province and then raiding Hushangabad District and crossing the Narmada he advanced into Malwa at the invitation of Chhatrasal. After plundering many villages and towns, he laid siege to Sironj.'[6] In the West, Gujrat had been subject to their raids from the time of Shivaji, and Surat had borne the brunt of his raids. Between November 1705 and July 1706 Dhanaji Jadhav surprised Ahmednagar, and inflicted a severe defeat on the Deputy Governor, taking him prisoner and levying the Chauth on the surrounding country.[7] These bold inroads into the rich imperial subahs, and the repeated reverses suffered by the Mughals in Maharastra seriously undermined the imperial prestige. Sick at heart Aurangzeb thought it expedient to bend before the storm. With the ostensible purpose of conciliating the Marathas, but really to create division amongst them, he now made a proposal for the release of Shahu. Twice did he open overtures, and twice did he fail to attract the sincerity and loyalty of the Marathas. A gloomy consciousness of a terrible failure stole upon his mind, and sorely disappointed, he withdrew to Devapur to breathe his last amid horrid scenes of wreckage and wastage. He had left behind a bleeding empire and hardly had he closed his eyes, when a war of succession broke out to deluge the country in fresh blood.

In Maharastra the confusion was unparalleled. Aurangzeb died on February 20, 1707; and as his sons withdrew, one to the south to take possession of his Subahs of Hyderabad and Bijapur, and the other to the north to contest for the throne, they denuded Maharastra of all their effectives. The Marathas who had been fighting against the Mughal Empire, suddenly found its spell vanished away. They had been long without a state to govern, a government to control their activities; now they found themselves even without an enemy to fight with. Their only rallying point, the only motive power of their patriotism, was gone. They had been long used to war

6 Sarkar's *Aurangzeb*, Vol. V, pp. 382—4.
7 *Ibid.*, pp. 431-2.

and were experts in predatory warfare ; but now there was no enemy against whom to direct their activities. Hence the floating mass of the lawless elements now off their anchor, drifted on to all sides without a point or purpose. Their chieftains constantly preyed upon the land and fought against one another. Tara Bai's government had neither power nor perseverance to convert them into peaceful citizens. And crowning these confusions broke out a civil war, as Shahu set foot in Maharastra by the middle of 1707. There arose two parties, one supporting the claim of Shahu, the other that of Tara Bai's son Shivaji. At last Shahu emerged victorious and ascended the throne at Satara in January 1708. Tara Bai withdrew to Kolhapur and made it her seat of government. Shahu had neither the ability nor the inclination to exterminate his rival ; and hostilities continued intermittently between them till 1731. Long inured to lawless habits the Maratha chieftains made the best of this civil war ; and during the complications arising out of these strifes, there came an astute diplomat, Nizam-ul-Mulk as the Viceroy of the Deccan. His one aim of life was to uproot the Marathas in the Deccan, and reign supreme over it. Indefatigable in his machinations, he drew around him all the disaffected, the self-seeking, and the ambitious of Maharastra. His activities made the confusion worse confounded. To the evils of a civil war were united the dreadful proceedings of a determined enemy. The Maratha chieftains like Chandrasen, Nimbalkar, Shripat Rao, Fatteh Singh, Raghoji Bhonsla and Dabhade, impelled by suicidal affections or aversions, actually undermined the prestige of the central authority. With untrammelled indifference each went his own way, and Shivaji's great ideal was forgotten. Indeed the political problems of Maharastra during this period—to establish a well regulated internal administration, to reclaim the people to civil life, to destroy the germs of the civil war, and in short, to lay the foundations of a stable state, were too baffling to be solved by a person like Shahu or Tara Bai. The one was an indolent, easy-going, peace-loving, and good-natured gentleman ; the other was a vindictive, self-seeking and short-sighted woman. Neither was the Astapradhan council up to the task. Shivaji's institution of Astapradhan was not a body of statesmen ; it was a collection of mere executive heads.

It could not initiate policies ; and it was too young and unschooled when it was well-nigh destroyed by the deadly blows of Aurangzeb. Thus the incapacity of Shahu, the selfish ambition of the Maratha chieftains, and the tangled problems of the state called for some men of outstanding ability and these were supplied by the famous Chitpavan family of Bhats. They rose equal to the occasion and extricated the state out of this great confusion. These were the Peshwas. Endowed with a penetrating mind and with great talents for organization, bright and fair in that rich beauty of Konkan, brave and eloquent, they proved by far the ablest of all the officers of Shahu, and hence rose to hold the helm of the state. In that age of self-centred cupidity, they were the only people every fibre of whose being thrilled with an altruistic ambition of establishing a Hindu sovereignty—not a Brahmin sovereignty as Rajwade calls it[8]—and to this their ambition, they yoked unflinching fervour, tireless energy and a deep-rooted love of work. Indeed at a time when Maharastra lay exhausted after the twenty-five years of warfare, when it was reeking with partisan blood, torn within and tormented without, and when the cry of the country was great for its relief, and for peace and goodwill among the countrymen, those who could ensure these naturally were destined to rule the country. Both the king and the Asta-pradhan council failed to do it, and hence the rise of the Peshwas was inevitable. From the diabolical indulgence in the civil war they turned the attention of their people to a land outside, rich and flourishing,—to conquer it and to establish their suzerainty over it. That is their great service to the state, to Maharastra.

But even they could not root out the canker, that had entered the very bone of Maharastra. The quarter of a century's war had done nothing if it had not breathed predatory propensities, contempt for all discipline and intolerance of control into the Marathas. In the enthusiasm of new hopes promised by the Peshwas, at the sight of golden vistas opening before them, they no doubt forgot their domestic quarrels, their old habits, but it was only a temporary lull. When the last vestiges of the Mughal Empire had crumbled to pieces, and

8 Rajwade, Vol. I, Introduction, p. 39.

the Marathas had stepped into the shoes of the Mughals, there ensued other scenes, the like of which have frequently occurred in Mediæval India. Once again the same lawless plunder, pitiless pursuit of war, and self-centred ambition broke out in greater fury and in their wake prowled poverty and pestilence, disease and death. By such activities as these the Marathas endeavoured to perpetuate the *Hindu-Pat-Padshahi* or Hindu sovereignty!

It is an irony of fate that the Marathas did not, for once look back to the great Shivaji for ideals, for inspiration. And at a time when they were learning to outlive their old predatory habits stepped in another nation, a more irresistible power than any that India had seen before. Such was the end of the Peshwas' great achievement.

II

MAHARASTRA IN 1707—1710—DIFFICULTIES OF SHAHU

THE difficulties of Shahu and the great political unrest of Maharastra are the chief factors in the rise of the Peshwas. Their rise is neither phenomenal nor accidental. They gradually worked their way up from an ordinary position to the headship of the state and eventually to *de facto* sovereignty. Balaji Vishwanath is the founder of the house of the Peshwas, who made the office hereditary in their family, paralysed the power of their colleagues and ultimately that of the king. To start with, they occupied a rank second to the *Pratinidhi's*. They had first to sweep him aside before they could make their position supreme in the state and once supreme in the state the king automatically yielded place to them. And all these they achieved on account of their superior ability. Thus in the attainment of supremacy they had first to eclipse the *Pratinidhi*, and the rest of their colleagues, and then the king. These two phases should be clearly noticed as the reader proceeds with the narrative, for 'this transfer of authority from the master to the servant is so gradually, silently, carefully accomplished that the successive steps important as they were in relation to the whole move, escaped all contemporary notice.'[9]

[9] Sen's *Administrative System of the Marathas*, p. 198.

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The office of the Peshwa was first created by Shivaji, and its seventh occupant was Balaji Vishwanath. The first six were Shamraj Nilkanth Rozekar, Moro Trimbak Pingle, Nilkanth Moreshwar Pingle, Parsram Trimbak Pratinidhi, Bahiro Moreshwar Pingle and Balakrishna Vasudev.[10] In Shivaji's council of Astapradhan the Peshwa was regarded as the first of the ministers and the head of the executive. Next in importance came the Senapati or the commander-in-chief. The Pant Amatya had the charge of the revenue and accounts. The Pant Sachiv controlled all correspondence and the record department. The Dabir was in charge of the foreign affairs. The Mantri was more or less the private secretary, and had the charge of the household. There were two other purely civil functionaries, the Nyayadhish and Pandit Rao in charge of the Judicial and Ecclesiastical departments respectively. These officers were never meant to be hereditary by Shivaji and 'there were frequent transfers from one office to another. The Peshwa's office, for instance, had been held by four different families, before it became hereditary in Balaji Vishwanath's line after nearly a hundred years from its creation.'[11] This system worked admirably during the life-time of Shivaji. Even Sambhaji, though he did not care much for it, yet followed on the lines of his father. The Peshwa still had the precedence in the official order of the ministers though Kalusha had usurped all the power in the kingdom. But significant changes were introduced during the reign of Rajaram. The relentless war of Aurangzeb broke the back of the Maratha state, and made the Astapradhan council a defunct body. The Peshwa's duties that 'he should perform all the works of administration, should make expeditions with the army and wage war and make necessary arrangements for the preservation of the districts that may come into possession and act according to the orders of the king'[12] became obsolete. When Rajaram fled to Jinji leaving the north in charge of Ramachandra Bavdekar

[10] Selections from the Satara Raja's and Peshwa's *Diaries*, Vol. I, pp. 41 and 42.

[11] Introduction to the Satara Raja's and Peshwa's *Diaries* by Ranade, p. 3.

[12] Sen's *Administrative System of the Marathas*, p. 50.

Hakumatpanah he was promptly besieged there by the Mughals. For eight years the siege continued with intermittent breaks. At Jinji the king had no kingdom to govern. He had only to defend a fortress, and therefore had not much work to entrust to his eight ministers. Nevertheless he respected the tradition and even went a step further. To his eight ministers he added another, called Pratinidhi who soon eclipsed the nominal prime minister, the Peshwa. Prahlad Niraji, the first *Pratinidhi,* was a favourite of Rajaram, and kept 'the young king constantly intoxicated by the habitual use of ganja and opium.[13] Thus he seized all the real power, and like the *Hakumat-panah* in the north he made himself supreme in the Maratha affairs of the south. This state of affairs points to the 'political impotence' of Rajaram and forms only a prelude to what was to happen during the regime of the house of the Bhats. The tradition of a deputy exercising all the authority of the king had taken root at this time, and became stronger as one weak king followed another. After the return of Rajaram to the north, the office of *Hakumat-panah* was abolished, but that of *Pratinidhi* was retained. He was considered superior to the Peshwa. 'The fixed salary of the *Pratinidhi* was 15,000 Hons, while for the Peshwa the salary was fixed at 13,000 Hons.'[14]

This state of affairs continued during the regency of Tara Bai and when Shahu emerged victorious in the struggle against her, he too retained the office in his council. He had nine instead of eight ministers. His *Pratinidhi* was Parsram Pant, and after him his son Shripat Rao, a personal friend of no mean influence, and there was every likelihood of his usurping the power of the state. But soon after Shahu's accession to the throne arose complications which the *Pratinidhi* could not properly comprehend and control. Therefore the power slipped away from his hands, and passed into those of Balaji Vishwanath, who rose equal to the occasion and consequently to prominence. Now to get a clear idea about the circumstances that led to Balaji Vishwanath's rise the condition of Maharastra and the difficulties of Shahu have to be briefly outlined.

13 Sarkar's *Aurangzeb,* Vol. V, p. 64.

14 Introduction to Satara Raja's and Peshwa's *Diaries* by Ranade, p. 3.

At the time of Aurangzeb's death Maharastra was in a disorderly condition. Tara Bai, the regent of her son Shivaji II, did not think it expedient to control the activities of her chieftains, whose one absorbing passion was to harass the Mughals on all sides. In this they had their own way and consulted their own interests, and Tara Bai following the example of her husband had assigned different parts of the Deccan to her commanders. Parsoji Bhonsla had East Berar as far as Nagpur ; Chimnaji Damodar, South Berar ; Kath Singh Kadam Rao, Khandesh ; Khanderao Dabhade, Gujrat ; Kanhoji Angre, Konkan ; Udaji Chouhan, Miraj ; Hindu Rao Ghorpade the Karnatic ; Damaji Thorat, Varshipangaon ; Dhanaji Jadhav, North Painghat ; and Haibat Rao Nimbalkar, South Painghat.[15] There was incessant struggle going on between these and the Mughal commanders, now reduced in strength because Azam had taken away with him the best part of the Mughal effectives. Of the imperial subahs of the Deccan, Aurangzeb had assigned by a will, Haidarabad or Golconda and Bijapur to Kambaksh, who was to rule like an independent prince. But he was too weak to stand the sweeping onslaught of the Marathas. Azam while withdrawing to the north knew full well that the Marathas would soon stamp out the Mughal sway from the Deccan in his absence. He felt concerned about it, but there was no help. He could not afford to let go the sovereignty of India for the sake of the precarious possession of the Deccan. As the imperial camp wended its way towards Hindustan a significant plan was suggested to him, that was calculated to meet the Mughal situation in the Deccan. Zulfikar Khan, a man of vast experience and deep insight into the mentality of the Marathas suggested that the best way to keep the Marathas busy in their own domestic affairs, and thereby to divert their attention from harassing the Mughals was to release Shahu, who was a prisoner in the camp, and whose release had been twice considered by Aurangzeb in order to create division amongst the Marathas. The presence of Shahu in Maharastra suggested Zulfikar Khan, would drive Tara Bai into bitter opposition against him, and the parties would soon fall into a civil war. Thus Shahu released, he said, would be a more potent weapon against

[15] *Itihasanchi Sadhane* by Rajwade, Vol. II, p. 5.

the Marathas than Shahu in captivity. This advice was approved by all, and Azam Shah released Shahu about the beginning of May 1707, at a village called Doraha near Nemawar to the north of the Narmada.[16]

Thus Shahu was set at liberty after a captivity of eighteen years. In November, 1689, he along with his mother Yesu Bai and many of the royal family, had been captured by Aurangzeb, when the capital of Maharastra Raigad, capitulated. Though a prisoner in the hands of the bitterest enemy of the Marathas yet Shahu was never ill-treated or subjected to any contumely. Far from it he was brought up like a prince with the warmest affection and tenderness. His religion and caste were never interfered with, even by that greatest of bigots, Aurangzeb. On the other hand, he always showed an unaffected love and tenderness towards him, and regarded him as his own grandson. That was due—this affectionate attitude was due perhaps to Zinat-un-Nisa, Aurangzeb's daughter, who took a fancy for the beautiful little prince, then only eight, and brought him up as her own son. A maid, throughout her life, she bestowed all her love and care on this boy, and was more than a mother to him. When Shahu came of age two beautiful brides were found out for him and Aurangzeb got his marriage celebrated with the pomp and grandeur befitting his rank.[17] Later on, when he discovered the signs of failure in his Deccan campaign he thought of releasing Shahu, not to conciliate the Marathas, but to create division amongst them, and thus to weaken them. Twice did he plan it, and twice did it fail owing to his own suspicious nature, that frustrated so many of his undertakings, and ruined his empire.[18] At last however on his death Azam, acting on the advice of Zulfikar Khan, released Shahu, on the condition that he should rule as a feudatory to Azam Shah, and leave behind him his mother, wives and a half-brother in the imperial camp as hostages. In return Azam granted him the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of the six subahs of the Deccan, and the provinces of Gondwana, Gujrat

16 Khafi Khan, *Elliot,* Vol. VII, p. 395, and Sardesai's *Marathi Riyasat,* Vol. I, p. 2.

17 Thorle Shahu Maharaj hyanche Charitra, i.e., *Life of Shahu Maharaj,* the Elder, by Chitnis, pp. 3—6.

18 Sarkar's *Aurangzeb,* Vol. V, pp. 205—7.

and Tanjore in addition to his paternal kingdom, during his good behaviour.[19] With this imperial grant Shahu took leave of his family and escorted by a slender following made his way into Maharastra.

The royal party consisting of about fifty to sixty persons, troopers and servants all told, made their journey westwards, and penetrating the Satpuras came into Khandesh *via* Bijagarh and Sultanpur. They thoroughly enjoyed the adventures on the way, and when they reached Bijagarh, the free-booter Mohan Singh joined them and gave them substantial help in the shape of the sinews of war. Passing on to the Parganah of Sultanpur, now Taluqa Sahade, they came to Kokarmanda where Ambu Pande had built himself a fort and ravaged the country from Surat to Burhanpur.[20] He was secured for Shahu, and towards the end of May Shahu's father-in-law Rustam Rao Jadhav, brought a fresh army to his service and was created a *Haft Hazari*.[21] Early June found Shahu at Lambkani, south of the Tapti, and then he actually entered Maharastra.

Lambkani forms a landmark in the history of Shahu; for it is here that he made his presence felt by the people, and established his claim to the throne with the support of some of the most powerful Maratha chieftains. Besides the adherence of Sujan Singh, the chief of Lambkani, there came Parsoji Bhonsla and tendered his homage to him. Of all the Maratha chieftains, who stood by Shahu at the time of his need, Parsoji rendered the most signal services. Claiming the same descent with the illustrious Shivaji, he ate publicly of the same plate with Shahu, the genuineness of whose descent had been questioned by Tara Bai, and thus dispelled all popular doubts about his birth. It had been noised abroad, as Shahu came to Maharastra that he was an impostor and not the real son of Sambhaji. Now Parsoji's action proved to the people Shahu's legitimacy beyond a shadow of doubt and therefore his claim to the throne could not be questioned.[22] Its

[19] *A History of the Maratha People*, Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, pp. 122-3.

[20] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 395.

[21] Rajwade, Vol. XX, Doc. No. 60.

[22] Nagpurkar Bhonslanchi Bakhar, i.e., *The Chronicle of the Bhonslas of Nagpur*, p. 20.

effect was soon felt in Maharastra, and there flocked to the support of his cause persons of no less importance than Haibat Rao Nimbalkar, Nemaji Sindhia and Chimnaji Damodar. Encouraged by this favourable turn of circumstances, Shahu wrote to various Sardars of Maharastra to come and pay homage to him, for he was the rightful heir to the throne. A month of anxiety and activity was passed at Lambkani, and when Shahu set out in July he had sufficiently strengthened his position, and endeared his cause to the people.[23]

Shahu's progress through the country, his sympathetic attention to the grievances of the people, and his conciliatory attitude towards the Maratha chieftains won for him loyalty and affection on all sides.

The fact that the son of the martyred king of the Marathas, had come back alive to claim his father's throne evoked a great deal of enthusiasm, and no less tenderness amongst the people. As the rainy season drew to its close, Shahu pitched his camp near Ahmednagar. Here he spent the whole of October preparing for the coming struggle with Tara Bai, who was as violent in the use of her tongue, as she was vigorous in her preparation against him. Shahu wanted to use Ahmednagar both as the seat of his power and base of his operations. That would have enormously enhanced his prestige. He had come with the imperial Farman, as the nominee of the Mughals, and that was also a factor in attracting the loyalty of the people. Now if Ahmednagar were his seat of power, as he wanted to make it,[24] it would have been a very great concession on the part of the Mughals, and a fitting recompense for the hardship that the Marathas had suffered at their hands. But the Mughals were loth to part with Ahmednagar, for it formed one of their strongest outposts in the Deccan. And Shahu was not inclined to wrest it from them, however feebly guarded it might have been at this time. To occupy it by force would have offended the Mughals, and he would have lost their moral support and sympathy in his struggle with Tara Bai. On the other hand he showed an importunity to placate them, and therefore determined to pay a visit to the tomb of Aurangzeb at Khuldabad.[25]

[23] *Marathi Riyasat* by Sardasai, Vol. I, p. 3.
[24] *Marathi Riyasat* by Sardasai, Vol. I, p. 4.
[25] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 395.

On his way there, he had to pass by a fortified village called Parad, twenty-five miles to the north-west of Doulatabad, whose headman opened fire on Shahu's army. A skirmish took place, in which the headman was killed, and the fort was stormed. At the end of the affair the widow of the headman came with her son, and with many a word of regret sought the protection of the king. That was most graciously granted, and because this was Shahu's first victory in Maharastra, he commemorated the occasion by giving the name Fatteh Singh to the boy and brought him up like a royal prince.[26] After his visit to Khuldabad he returned to Nagar, where he watched the course of affairs. By this time he felt conscious of his strength, and cautious as he was he did not like to throw away the advantages he had gained so far by anticipating Tara Bai and rashly attacking her. He determined not to cross the Bhima unless he was sure of his success in the contest.

Shahu's advent into Maharastra embittered the feelings of Tara Bai, and she determined to offer a stubborn resistance. Indeed she was bold in her assertion that Shahu could have no reasonable claim to the throne. Violent as she was of temper, she could not have been sparing in her denunciations against Shahu ; but apart from that her convictions in the matter are clear from the following extract from a letter that she wrote to Som Naik, Desai of Setwad, on September 17, 1707. 'The news has reached us that Rajashri Shahu Raja has been released by the Mughals. Let it be so. This kingdom had been won by the exertion of Shivaji the great, of sacred memory, but Rajashri Sambhaji Raja lost it. Rajaram then ascended the throne, and he recovered the kingdom by his own prowess. He protected it and defeated the Mughals. The kingdom began to prosper. Secondly Shivaji the great of sacred memory wanted to leave this kingdom to Rajaram. That being so, he (Shahu) has no claim to it. Those who have joined him or want to join him, we have ordered Rajashri Jai Singh, Jadhav Rao Senapati (Commander-in-Chief), Hambir Rao Mohite Sarlaskar, and others with an army to chastise. Rajashri Parsram Pant Pratinidhi has also been sent.'[27] Thus Tara Bai

[26] *Life of Shahu the Elder*, pp. 15-16.
[27] *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. 1, pp. 5-6.

unequivocally rejects the claim of Shahu to the throne on the ground firstly, that the kingdom of Shivaji had been lost by Sambhaji, and it was Rajaram who recovered it from the Mughals ; secondly, that Shivaji on his death-bed had nominated Rajaram and not Sambhaji to succeed him. Further, as is well known, the brutal conduct of Sambhaji towards Rajaram's mother could neither be forgiven nor forgotten. Rightly therefore, Shivaji II, Rajaram's son, and not Shahu, Sambhaji's son, was the real heir to the throne.

Convincing as these arguments might appear Tara Bai did not rest content with correspondence alone. She meant to enforce on her people, what she wrote to them in letters. With this motive, she assembled all the highest officers of the state, viz., Parsram Pant Pratinidhi, Ramachandra Pant Amatya, Sankaraji Sachiv, Nilkanth Moreshwar Pradhan the Peshwa, Dhanaji Jadhav the Senapati, Khando Ballal the Chitnis, and others, and urged them to take an oath on boiled rice and milk to the effect that they must remain true to the cause of her son, and must combine to do away with Shahu.[28] The question whether Shahu was an impostor, or the true son of Sambhaji, did not arise at all. In any case she had told them, he had no right to the throne as against the son of Rajaram. The situation was indeed delicate for the Maratha nobles. Many took the oath, some wavered in indecision, and Dhanaji Jadhav and Khando Ballal protested strongly, that if Shahu were an impostor they would combine to do away with him, but if he were the real son of Sambhaji, they would not. This disagreement proved ultimately advantageous to Shahu, for each party in its eagerness to ascertain the truth about Shahu sent a trustworthy person to Shahu's camp. Tara Bai deputed Bapuji Bhonsla, Parsoji Bhonsla's brother,[29] and Dhanaji Jadhav, his revenue secretary Balaji Vishwanath. The former did not return, but the latter did, quite convinced that Shahu was no impostor, and persuaded Dhanaji to espouse his cause. The result was evident in the battle of Khed, a little later.

Tara Bai's cause was further weakened on account of the mutual ill-will amongst her own nobles which she could neither

28 *Life of Shahu the Elder*, pp. 13-14; *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I. p. 7.
29 *The Chronicle of the Bhonslas of Nagpur*, p. 20.

comprehend nor control. She placed undue confidence in Parsram Pant Pratinidhi, and this was resented by his personal enemy Ramachandra Pant Amatya. Parsram Pant therefore always took care to frustrate the wise measures suggested by Ramachandra Pant, through his influence with Tara Bai. Tara Bai even took a strong prejudice against him. In sheer disgust therefore, Ramachandra Pant opened treasonable negotiation with Shahu, and Tara Bai apprised of this confined him in the fortress of Vasantagad. Extremely exasperated he vowed vengeance on Tara Bai and actively conspired with Dhanaji and other leading chiefs and urged them to go over to Shahu.[30] All these intrigues bore bitter fruits for Tara Bai.

Thus she was undermining her strength by her own blind prejudices, at a time when great balance of mind, and a spirit of conciliation were the most pressing needs. Shahu on the other hand showed great affection for the people and superior commonsense and fortitude, in his dealings with all. As against these attractive qualities of Shahu, they could see nothing but the idiocy of Shivaji, and the vindictive and arrogant nature of his mother. Therefore the personality of Shahu was no less a factor in his ultimate victory over Tara Bai, than the cumulative effect of the rest of the circumstances.

Shahu was not disposed to hasten matters. But Tara Bai who noticed that delay would injure her interests, determined to take the offensive and set her armies in motion after the Diwali festival. About November 15, 1707, her Senapati Dhanaji Jadhav associated with Parsram Pant Pratinidhi, arrived near Chakan at the head of forty thousand troops.[31] A few marches forward the battle was joined with Shahu's forces at the village of Khed. The Senapati, acting according to a pre-arranged plan remained indifferent, and the Pratinidhi fighting single-handed was badly beaten, lost from four to five thousand men, and fled[32] away a fugitive to Chakan, and thence to Satara. Since no authentic account of the battle is available, it is very doubtful whether such a large number of men were actually killed.

[30] *History of the Chiefs of Ichalkaranji* (Mahrathi), p. 22.
[31] *Life of Shahu the Elder*, p. 16.
[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 16 and 17.

But if the number of casualties is doubtful, there is no doubt about the result of the battle. It was an easy victory for Shahu, followed by Dhanaji's openly joining his standards after the flight of the Pratinidhi.

Khed shattered the hopes and undermined the position of Tara Bai. The rent that had been created in the ranks of her nobles could not be made up. Dhanaji's desertion served as a signal for that of many others. Chief among them were Kando Ballal Chitnis[33] and Bahiro Pant Pingle the brother of Nilkanth Moreshwar Pingle, Tara Bai's Peshwa.[34] Like his brother, Bahiro Pant was made the Peshwa by Shahu, and was thus amply rewarded for his desertion. Fortune seemed to smile on Shahu after the battle of Khed.

From Khed Shahu went to Jejuri where he worshipped the gods, fed the Brahmans and distributed gifts in commemoration of his victory.

Proceeding south-west he came to a halt at Shirwal, in whose neighbourhood stood the giant fortress of Rohida, then held by Shankaraji Narayan Sachiv. Shahu's further progress was arrested, until he took the fortress from the Sachiv. Shahu therefore commanded him to surrender, and to join his standard. The Sachiv however shut himself up in a bitterness of feeling, for he was constantly haunted by the gloomy thought that he had taken the side of Tara Bai and had proved a traitor to the rightful heir Shahu, and in this agitated state of mind he swallowed diamond dust and put an end to his life.[35]. This incident, happening as it did, after Shahu's victory at Khed, gave a complete turn to the condition of his affairs.

Automatically all the fortresses under the Sachiv—Rajgad, Torna or Prachandagad, Rohida or Vichitragad, Purandar and Sinhgad—surrendered to Shahu, and thus the whole country north of the Nira came under his possession. He was now the lord of Northern Maharastra and a finishing touch to these acquisitions was given when Chandan-Wandan opened its gates to him. Secure in the north Shahu now left Shirwal determined to take Satara.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[34] *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 11; Rajwade, Vol. XV, Doc. 360.

[35] Rajwade, Vol. XV, Doc. 289, p. 299; Peshwanchi Bakhar, i.e., *Chronicle of the Peshwas*, p. 3.

Satara was the seat of Tara Bai's government, and at the time when Shahu marched upon it Tara Bai had left it under Parsram Pant and had gone to Panhala. Considering the strength of the fortress there was no likelihood of its easy conquest. Shahu was clever enough to find that out and before he tried force he tried diplomacy. He wrote to the Pratinidhi inducing him to surrender it without resistance, but since the latter would not yield he laid siege to it. Determined to take it in eight days Shahu threatened the commandant of the fort, Shaikh Mira, saying that he would blow off from the mouth of guns his wife and children, whom he had captured and brought from Wai in case he did not surrender the fortress. This struck terror into the heart of Shaikh Mira and he showed his readiness to do the bidding of Shahu. But since the Pratinidhi resisted the intrepid commandant threw him into prison and opened the gates to Shahu on Saturday 1, January 1708, exactly on the eighth day of Shahu's resolution. Along with the fortress was secured the person of the Pratinidhi, the right-hand man of Tara Bai.

Thus at once Tara Bai lost her capital and her chief adviser in the struggle. The conquest of Satara forms another landmark in the history of Shahu. It brought to a happy close what had been begun at Lambkani and continued at Khed. But it meant more than this. It indicated the revival of the Maratha kingdom under the grandson of the great Shivaji. All had come off so far as desired by Shahu ; only his coronation remained to be celebrated.

Tara Bai retired beyond the Krishna leaving Shahu master of all the territory in the north. Shahu thought, her submission, now that Satara had fallen, was only a question of time. And being a man of affectionate nature, he did not like to press his own aunt to extremity. He therefore let Tara Bai take her own time before she submitted, and he now made preparations for his coronation. January 12 was fixed by the royal astrologers as the auspicious day for the ceremony. It fell on Monday, the first day of the bright half of the sacred month of Magh. Shahu properly anointed took his bath in holy waters, and at an appointed hour ascended the throne of his ancestors. Auspicious music, and the booming of the guns from the fort, proclaimed that Shahu had become the king of

Maharastra. The ceremony came to a close amidst a blaze of jewels and glitter of gold.

Next the king proceeded to make new appointments or confirmations to the various offices in a formal way. He appointed Bahiro Pant Pingle as his Peshwa, Dhanaji Jadhav as his Senapati, Naro Shanker as his Sachiv, Ramachandra Pant Pande as his Mantri, Mahadaji Gadadhar as his Sumanta, Amburao Hanmante as his Amatya, Honaji Anant as Nyayadhish, and Mudgal Bhat as his Pandit Rao. Further Haibat Rao Nimbalkar was created Sarlaskar and Khando Ballal, Chitnis to the king. Parsram Pant Pratinidhi being still in prison, Gadadhar Prahlad, the son of Prahlad Niraji, was appointed to his office. In the hour of his glory Shahu did not forget those to whom he owed his success. Parsoji Bhonsla than whom nobody had a greater claim on Shahu's gratitude, was given the title of Sena-Sahib-Subah and along with it a sumptuous jagir to maintain his rank. Apart from this reward, Shahu always cherished a fondness for him and his house.[36] There were made other minor appointments, which have no bearing upon our narrative. Thus was Shahu's reign inaugurated in Maharastra.

Shahu ruled for about forty-one years from January 12, 1708 to December 15, 1749. It is a period of far-reaching changes in the history of India and of Maharastra as well. History of India recorded the decline and fall of the Mughal Empire, the gradual rise of European nations, the invasions from beyond the passes, and the cumulative effect of all, the dissolution of the old order and the rise of the new. In Maharastra also similar scenes are presented to our eyes. The early years of Shahu's reign witnessed hopeless confusion in the *Swarajya*, out of which the Peshwas evolved order, and as the reign advanced greater responsibilities were shelved on to their shoulders. Rising equal to the occasion they initiated new policies, and it is to their transcendental personal qualities that the Maratha Empire owed its inception. Great transformation was wrought in the Maratha territories, and by the time of Shahu's death the path had been paved for one-man power. That power was that of the Peshwas. Thus Shahu's reign

36 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vo. I, p. 13.

marks the twilight of confusion and construction, not only in Maharastra but in the whole of India, and from that point of view it is invested with exceeding interest for the student of history.

The most difficult problem that confronted Shahu after his coronation was how to deal with Tara Bai,—how to square his own interests with those of Tara Bai. She had been beaten in the contest, but not crushed. If Shahu had resumed the campaign with the same vigour as he had begun it, she would have been brought to her knees in no time.[37] But Shahu had neither the energy nor inclination for it. He was by temperament incapable of stern action or sustained exertion. He was further persuaded by interested persons like Khande Rao Dabhade to pursue a conciliatory policy towards his uncle's family. Accordingly Shahu seriously considered the question of ceding the whole country to the south of the Warna to Tara Bai's son, and actually made overtures for a treaty with her to this effect on January 16, 1708.[38] If she had consented, the fatal civil war that convulsed Maharastra and gathered force as the years rolled by, would have ended here, instead of twenty-three years later in 1731. But that was not to be, and Tara Bai was implacable in her enmity against Shahu.

Undaunted by her recent discomfitures she formed new plans for a fresh contest. She released Ramachandra Pant, whom she had imprisoned in Vasantgad, and won him over again by an expression of deep regret for the past, and profession of friendship for the future.[39] She secured the Sawant of Wadi,[40] and Kanhoji Angre on her side, besides the powerful Sardar Sidhoji Hindu Rao, Santaji Ghorpade's first nephew. Then she put Rangna in a perfect condition to stand a long siege, and remained awaiting the development of affairs on Shahu's side.

These preparations of Tara Bai forced the hands of Shahu, and he embarked on a campaign against her in February 1708.[41]

37 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 14.
38 Rajwade, Doc. 282, pp. 410-11.
39 *History of the Chiefs of Ichalkaranji* (Mahrathi), p. 22.
40 Rajwade, Vol. VIII, Doc. 62, pp. 83 and 84.
41 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 15.

From Satara he marched by slow stages to Panhala, and thence to Panchganga.[42] On the way Vasantged and Pawangad fell to his hands, and having thus established his outposts round Kolhapur he passed on to Rangna. Vishalgad surrendered on the way, and when Shahu arrived near Rangna or Prasiddhagad, Tara Bai shut its gates, called the Sawant of Wadi and Kanhoji Angre to her aid, and resolved to stand a long siege. Her plans were admirably laid. She would hold the fortress, while her allies, the Sawant and Angre would harass the besiegers. But the latter did not turn up, and of them the Sawant actually joined Shahu against her.[43] Ramachandra Pant, whom she had made her chief adviser now, soon discovered signs of weakness in the defence, and therefore advised her to escape from the fort with her son. In the early stages of the siege he managed to send the mother and son out of the fort, and himself remained to hold out as long as possible. When the siege had lasted three months, and the fort came to the verge of surrender, Ramachandra Pant secretly persuaded Dhanaji Jadhav to prevail upon Shahu to raise the siege.[44] Further he got Tara Bai to write to Dhanaji, Khando Ballal and even Parsram Pant, inducing them to join her. In her letter dated May 23, 1708, she urges them 'not to harbour any slight or suspicion' against her, to desert Shahu and to take her side.[45] Their persuasion was not entirely lost upon Dhanaji and his colleagues. Indeed they were averse to the idea of entirely crushing Tara Bai, for in that case Shahu would be unduly powerful, and they would not be able to serve their own interests at his cost. They could keep Shahu under their thumb so long as the civil war was going on. Hence Dhanaji pleaded strongly for raising the siege because the heavy monsoon rains had set in. The only dissentient voice was that of Parsoji Bhonsla. But Shahu yielded, and ordered the siege operations to be stopped. Placing Nilo Ballal, the brother of Khando Ballal Chitnis, in charge of the newly conquered territories he returned to Panhala by June 24, 1708.[46]

42 Rajwade, Vol. III, Doc. 64, p. 66.
43 *Ibid.*, Doc. 67, p. 88.
44 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 16.
45 Rajwade, Vol. VIII, Docs, 64 to 66, pp. 86 and 87.
46 *Marathi Riyasat*, p. 16.

Thus ended the campaign of Rangna in partial success. It brought fresh acquisitions, but Tara Bai was not crushed. That was due to the irresolution of Shahu. His leniency, that characterized all his dealings, readily responded to the pleadings of the interested chieftains. Dhanaji and others were more interested in increasing their jagirs than in fighting the battles of Shahu. During the Rangna campaign, Dhanaji was taking a malicious delight in fomenting the family disputes between the Jagdales and the Pisales. Hindu Rao Ghorpade, in pursuance of his family feuds, had taken side against Dhanaji. Balaji Vishwanath, Dattaji Sheodev, and Naro Ram Shenvi were busy in bringing about a compromise between the disputants. Parsoji was anxious to get a jagir sanctioned for his protege Ramaji Narain Kolhatkar. Such was the condition of Shahu's Camp, when Tara Bai made her escape from Rangna. Thus Shahu's own character and the indifference of his chieftains were responsible for the fact that only a partial success was obtained in the Rangna campaign.

When Shahu withdrew from Rangna he had thought of resuming the siege after the rains. But an after-thought led him to change his mind, and he showed great anxiety to occupy the Konkan and the Karnatic. While at Panhala he despatched letters to the Poligars of the Karnatic commanding them to recognize his authority. To reduce Tara Bai he applied to the Governor of Bombay, Sir Nicholas Waite, for a supply of ammunition, European soldiers and money, but the latter did not consent to it.[47] Further about the middle of the year 1708 died Dhanaji Jadhav and on November 4, that year his son Chandra Sen succeeded to the office.[48] Chandra Sen's conduct was not above suspicion, and his mind wavered between Shahu and Tara Bai. On account of these reasons Shahu thought it wise to leave Tara Bai in entire possession of the whole country to the south of the Warna, and accordingly withdrew his troops from those parts by the end of the year 1708.[49]

Tara Bai was not slow to take advantage of this changed attitude of Shahu. When Shahu left Panhala and retired to Satara towards the end of 1708, she returned from Malwan

47 Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 422.
48 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I. p. 20.
49 *Ibid.*

and took possession of the fortress of Vishalgad.[50] Soon the country south of the Warna passed into her hands, and following the advice of Ramachandra Pant she desisted from transgressing the line of the Warna and fixed her headquarters at Kolhapur. Next she turned to reckon with the Sawant of Wadi. He had betrayed her cause at a time when she was hard pressed by Shahu in the fortress of Rangna. Wadi is contiguous to Kolhapur, and she now deputed against him Ramachandra Pant, who operating in combination with the commandant of Vishalgad soon brought him to his knees, and extorted an agreeable treaty from him. Thus she established her power without injuring the interests of Shahu, who therefore did not like to molest her and let her have her own way. As a tangible proof of this intention, Shahu called back Parsoji Bhonsla, whom he had posted in the neighbourhood of Kolhapur to keep an eye on the movements of Tara Bai, about the beginning of 1709. It appeared as if amicable relations would now subsist between Shahu and Tara Bai.

The parties would have lived in peace had it not been for the arrival of Bahadur Shah in the Deccan towards the end of the year 1708. In the battle of Jajau, towards the end of June 1707, Azam Shah had been defeated and killed.[51] His elder brother Mauzzam, the victor at Jajau, had ascended the throne with the style of Bahadur Shah, early in July. Shahu had taken care to send his wakil or envoy, Raybhanji Bhonsla to the court, and had paid his homage to the new emperor. In return Bahadur Shah confirmed him in his possession and elevated him to the Mansab of ten thousand.[52] Soon after his accession Bahadur Shah was called upon to conduct a campaign in Rajputana, and while still there, heard that Kambaksh had assumed the signs of sovereignty.[53] In answer to a kind letter, by which Bahadur Shah relinquished the two Subahs of Bijapur and Golconda, and remitted the tribute to be paid to the imperial treasury, but commanded 'that the coins shall be struck and the Khutba read in our name,' Kambaksh wrote a provok-

[50] *History of the Chiefs of Ichalkaranji* (Mahrathi), p. 23.
[53] *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, pp. 45—48.
[52] Rajwade, Vol. VIII, Docs. 55 to 57: the dates of these documents
[51] *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, pp. 22—32.
are wrong.

ing reply.[54] Therefore Bahadur Shah closed his Rajputana campaign in haste and marched into the Deccan. On his way he summoned Shahu to his presence to render military service to him.[55] Shahu grateful for all the kind treatment that he had received in the imperial camp, and eager to secure the favour of the new emperor, readily despatched an army under Nemaji Sindhia. Nemaji, writes Khafi Khan, was "one of the most renowned of all the Na-Sardars (Maratha Sardars), and one of the greatest leaders of the accursed armies of the Dakhin. His plundering raids had extended as far as the province of Malwa."[56] In spite of that, the accursed infidel rendered signal services to the emperor in his contest against Kambaksh. Kambaksh with a mere wreck of an army met the imperialists, who had been reinforced by the Marathas, near Haiderabad, and was defeated and taken prisoner covered with wounds. This battle was fought on January 13, 1709, and Kambaksh expired the next day.[57] Taking advantage of the emperor's victory in which the Marathas had acquitted themselves creditably Shahu sent his own wakil to the emperor for the grant of 'the Sardeshmukhi and the Chauth of the six subahs of the Deccan on the condition of restoring prosperity to the ruined land.'[58] The emperor had no hesitation to grant his prayer, and indeed the royal Farman had been written and was ready to be despatched when the arrival of Tara Bai's agent upset the whole plan of Shahu. Tara Bai through her agent disputed the right of Shahu to the Sardeshmukhi and Chauth of the Deccan, and pleaded for securing the Sardeshmukhi only for her son. Her pleadings would have fallen on deaf years, had it not been for the support of the Khan-i-Khanan Munim Khan. Owing to a recent disagreement between Zulfikar Khan and Munim Khan over the control of the civil and revenue affairs of the Deccan, and the constant jealousy for predominance in the court, they now took opposite sides,—Zulfikar Khan supporting the cause of Shahu, and Munim Khan that of Tara Bai, and 'a great con-

[54] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 406.
[55] Rajwade, Vol. VIII, Doc. 56, p. 78.
[56] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 408.
[57] *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 62.
[58] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 408.

tention arose upon the matter between the two ministers.'[59] Bahadur Shah could not decide either way. At last an interesting plan was put forward by Munim Khan. He suggested that Shahu and Tara Bai should fight out their cause, and whoever emerged successful should have the Sardeshmukhi rights.[60] The emperor accepted the plan, and returned the envoys to their principals. Thus 'the orders about the Sardeshmukhi remained inoperative,'[61] and the emperor left for the north crossing the Narmada on December 25, 1709.[62]

This decision of the emperor again kindled the flames of the civil war between Shahu and Tara Bai. Bent upon establishing their claim, they now prepared to fight to a finish. The parties stooped to the meanest manœuvres to outwit each other. They tried to corrupt each other's officers, and to seize each other's forts and outposts. They eagerly courted the help of the avaricious chieftains, and made profuse promises for the grant of fresh lands and jagirs. Just as it emerged from the deadly effects of Aurangzeb's war, the country succumbed to these domestic troubles. The people still persisted in their lawless habits, and the partizans of Shahu and Tara Bai, conscious of their importance to their respective chiefs, found it most profitable to fish in troubled waters. Indeed the country was honeycombed with the unruly chieftains like Damaji Thorat, Krishna Rao Khataokar, Udaji Chouhan and others, who lived on organized plunder and spread terror through the land.[63] In such circumstances law and order can never thrive, and in such circumstances did Balaji Vishwanath find the country when he was selected by Shahu to help him out of the situation, and to save the country from anarchy. All the reliable and experienced men, who could do this, were dead by now. Dhanaji died in 1708, and Parsoji Bhonsla a year later. Therefore Shahu was forced to choose Balaji Vishwanath as his helper from amongst his other officers, and he more than amply justified the choice. Like all great men he made

59 *Ibid.*, p. 409.
60 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 24.
61 Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 409.
62 *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 67.
63 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 24 ; Rajwade, Vol. III, Doc. 343.

his mark in these times of difficulties, and rose to the most prominent position in the state. He restored order to Shahu's kingdom.

Amidst these troubles Shahu found some solace in marrying two more wives, Sakwar Bai and Saguna Bai. He must have been feeling dreadfully lonely, for he had left his family in the imperial court. It was again Balaji Vishwanath who, as will be noticed later, restored his family to him. Therefore the first of the House of the Peshwas, was the first and best servant of the House of the Bhonslas.

RISE OF THE PESHWAS

CHAPTER I

BALAJI VISHWANATH'S RISE TO PESHWASHIP—SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY

EARLY CAREER OF BALAJI VISHWANATH

FAR away in the west where the green landscape of the Konkan fades over the water's blue, and the wavy line of the Ghats presents a dreamy picture of hoary antiquity, there is a village called Shriwardhan. Near by flows the little river Savitri, and empties itself into the Bankot creek. In this village was born Balaji Vishwanath, in the family of the Bhats, who were the hereditary Deshmukhs of the village. He passed his early boyhood in this delightful spot, on which all the grand aspects of nature shed their influence. Born to wealth and authority, he must have early imbibed those sterling qualities that distinguish a leader of men. As a child he must have heard in silent horror the stories of the cruelties of the Abyssinians and the Portuguese. In his boyish curiosity he must have pondered long on the adventures and achievements of the great Shivaji, and his miraculous escape from the Mughal court. He must have seen in his prime of youth the majestic figure of that great king, and must have been fired with an ambition to serve him, and the cause, for which he lived and died. All these are fascinating no doubt, but lack historical testimony. Sober history however, unfolds a tale which is not less fascinating and at the same time abounds in human interest.

In the Konkan, where the Savitri falls into the sea at a distance of about eighty miles to the south of Bombay, there were two villages Shriwardhan and Belas, the former situated on its northern, and the latter on its southern bank. In these two villages lived two families, the Bhats and the Bhanus, long known to each other and for long friendly to each other. In

this family of Bhats was born Balaji about the year 1660.[1] His father Vishwanath, and his ancestors were the hereditary Deshmukhs of the village, and owed allegiance to the Sidis of Janjira.[2] When Shivaji vowed to establish Swadharma or Hindu religion, Swarajya or Hindu state and Swatantrya or Hindu freedom, many Hindus from the Konkan groaning under the oppression of the Sidi came to serve him. One such was Vishwanath Bhat, Balaji's father, the nature of whose services to Shivaji, there is no means of knowing. After the death of his father, Balaji with his elder brother Janoji took charge of the office of Deshmukh of the village.[3] A little later owing to a misunderstanding with Sidi Shamal then ruling at Janjira, Balaji had to leave the village with all his family.[4] He crossed over to the other side of the river Savitri, and came to the Bhanus in Belas.[5] The three Bhanu brothers Hari, Ramaji and Balaji Mahadev with the fugitive Balaji Vishwanath took counsel together, and afraid of the Sidi, determined to leave the country for the Desh, beyond the Ghats. But in due time the Sidi had been apprised of the flight of Balaji Vishwanath, and he wrote to the Abyssinian governor of Anjanwel to apprehend him. He was accordingly captured and was kept a prisoner for about twenty to twenty-five days, before the Bhanu brothers could purchase his release by bribing the Governor.[6] As a mark of his gratitude to the Bhanus, Balaji promised on oath that whatever he would earn in the Desh,[7] one-quarter of it he would resign to the Bhanus—a promise which he and his successors faithfully kept to the last. While still at Anjanwel, one Visaji Narayan rendered very great help to him, for which later in life when he was the Peshwa, he granted him a pension of

[1] *Varsik Itivrutta, Shake 1867* (Annual Historical Report published by the Poona Itihas Samshodhak Mandal), pp. 91—96; *Marathi Riyasat,* Vol. I, p. 30.

[2] *Sanmasik Vrutta, Shake 1834* (Half-yearly Report published by the Poona Itihas Samshodhak Mandal), pp. 70-71; *Varsik Itivrutta Shake 1837,* pp. 86—90.

[3] Sohni's *Chronicle of the Peshwas,* p. 1; *Bharat Varsa,* Vol. II, August 1899, p. 1.

[4] *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder* by Chitnis, p. 21; *Bharat Varsa,* Vol. II, August, p. 2; *Rajwade,* Vol. II, p. 1.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Bharat Varsa,* Vol. II, August, p. 2.

[7] *Ibid.*

Rs. 700 a year.[8] From there they started to visit the temple of Bhargav Ram, where it is surmised Balaji got the blessing of Brahmendra Swami, the celebrated saint of the Konkan.[9] In the Desh he purchased the Patil-ship of a village called Garade, near Saswad, and invited his brother-in-law to come and live there. It is here that he came into contact with the Purandares, who were the old residents of the place.[10]

Coming of a rich and distinguished family of the Konkan he soon attracted notice in the Desh. His abilities soon won him new honours, and in 1692 he became the Deshmukh of Dandarajpuri and Sabhasad of Dabhol.[11] During the disastrous days of Aurangzeb's war, he filled many a responsible office in the Maratha state, and gained proficiency in revenue administration. Side by side he acquired a good knowledge of the military organization of the Marathas and of the Mughals. In those days revenue collection depended upon military force, and all revenue officers had to maintain troops to facilitate their work. So Balaji, even when serving as a revenue officer, gained experience in organizing and leading armies. As Malhar Ram Rao Chitnis wrote of him, ' he was a valiant warrior,'[12] and he got his first training as a warrior at this time. In co-operation with Ambaji Purandare he took the contract of collecting Dhanaji's share of the Chauth from the Mughal territories, and therefore had to maintain five to ten hundred troops.[13] He had thus worked for several years as a revenue collector, before he was made the Sar-subhedar of Poona and Daulatabad between 1699 and 1708.[14] This was a very responsible office, corresponding to that of the Commissioner of a division at present. About this time he first became acquainted with Shahu and his mother, under what circumstances we do not

8 *Dwitiya Sammelan Vrutta,* Report of the Second Meeting, pp. 193—196.

9 *Brahmendra Swami:* His life by D. B. Parasnis, p. 9.

10 *Marathi Riyasat,* Vol. I, p. 28.

11 *Varsik Itivrutta, Shake 1834,* pp. 200—209.

12 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder,* p. 36.

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Saptama Sammelan Vrutta,* Report of the Seventh Meeting, pp. 125—128; Peshwa Daftarantil Sanadapatran-til Mahiti—Accounts derived from the Sanadpatras in the Peshwa's Daftar, pp. 122—124; Purandare Daftar—Daftar of the Purandares—Part I, pp. 42-43.

know.[15] They were then prisoners in the imperial camp, at Brahmapuri on the southern bank of the Bhima. Aurangzeb lived there for four years and a half from May 21, 1695 to October 19, 1699,[16] and it was during these years that Balaji rendered some services to Shahu, and obtained his favour.[17] Now Balaji's stars were on the ascendant. He had come into intimate contact with the Joshis of Pali, of whom Mahadaji Krishna later on gave his daughter in marriage to Baji Rao, Balaji's eldest son. Through his influence with Tara Bai, Mahadaji Krishna got Balaji established at Rangna.[18] Shortly after he took service under Dhanaji Jadhav[19] the Senapati of Tara Bai and while still in his service he raided Gujrat. The historian of Gujrat remarks that 'as soon as Aurangzeb's death was known, the Marathas under Balaji Vishwanath burst into east Gujrat, marching through Jhabhua and Godhra, where they were ineffectually opposed by the governor, Murad Baksh.' Balaji next intended an attack on Ahmedabad and as he approached the city, consternation seized all people high and low, rich and poor. 'The Viceroy thoroughly alarmed concluded a treaty with Balaji and on receiving a tribute of Rs. 210,000 the Marathas withdrew.'[20] Here we come across for the first time an instance of Balaji's great military ability. The fact that he struck terror into the hearts of the people and their protectors alike, shows that he must have been a leader of note. Thus Balaji had a brilliant career and antecedent, and varied experience about the men and matters of his times before he was of any use to Shahu.

[15] *Trutiya Sammelan Vrutta*—Report of the Third Meeting, pp. 85—91.

[16] *Aurangzeb*, Vol. V, p. 6.

[17] *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 30.

[18] *Panchama Sammelan Vrutta*—Report of the Fifth Meeting, pp. 1—11.

[19] *Saptama Sammelan Vrutta*—Report of the Seventh Meeting, pp. 125—128.

[20] *History of Gujrat, Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, part I, p. 296. Here the author refers to Mirat-i-Ahmedi, which being an independent source must be true when it asserts that Balaji led a large number of Marathas into Gujrat in 1707. Further it is entirely in keeping with the later facts. If Balaji were not a military leader of proved merit, Shahu could not have bestowed the title of Senakarte soon after in 1708.

SHAHU AND BALAJI

When Shahu entered Maharastra he was the Sar-subhedar of Daulatabad, in charge of the collection of the annual black-mail, and therefore a trusted lieutenant of the Senapati Dhanaji Jadhav.[21] In consequence of the disagreement between Dhanaji and Tara Bai on the matters of the oath, as has been observed already, the former sent Balaji to Shahu's camp, to ascertain whether Shahu was really the son of Sambhaji. When he returned satisfied on the point, he persuaded his chief to adhere to Shahu, and it was just for that that Dhanaji had been contending against Tara Bai. So there is nothing very extraordinary in the fact that the master and the servant resolved to join Shahu. But unlike Dhanaji, Balaji was never half-hearted in his adherence. We have seen in the Introductory II, how Dhanaji's devotion to the cause of Shahu was not above reproach. He was actuated by a selfish desire, to profit at the cost of his master, and actually yielded to the persuasion of Ramachandra Pant for closing the Rangna campaign, which he knew would be detrimental to the interests of Shahu. But Balaji never faltered in his loyalty to Shahu. Once he adhered to him, he remained unmoved ; and his unflinching adherence bore golden fruits for him. On the occasion of his coronation, Shahu appointed him Mutaliq to the Amatya Ambu Rao Hanmante.[22] After the death of Dhanaji, between June and November 1708, he was given the title of Senakarte, or the organizer of armies, which again bears testimony to his military abilities.[23] In June 1708 died Dhanaji, and in November of the same year Chandra Sen, his son succeeded to his office. Chandra Sen did not like this elevation of Balaji to the office of Senakarte, and since then became jealous of him.[24] Shortly after this, as has been narrated already, there came Bahadur Shah into the Deccan, and when he left for the north, Maharastra was plunged into a civil war. Shahu and Tara Bai prepared to proceed to the extreme. The country was seeth-

21 *Varsik Itivrutta, Shake 1837*, pp. 302-303.

22 *Trutiya Sammelan Vrutta*—Report of the Third Meeting, pp. 85—91.

23 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 32.

24 *Rajwade*, Vol, II, p. 7; Introductory II.

ing with anarchy, and the ambitious chieftains were not slow to defy the central authority and set up their independence. As a result of his two years of warfare (1708—10) Shahu had established his sway over not more than twenty-five miles round Satara. The rest of the country was held in strength either by the partisans of Tara Bai or the predatory chiefs who were loth to recognize any authority. Such were Damaji Thorat in Supa, Shahaji Nimbalkar at Faltan, Udaji Chauhan in Miraj, Khem Sawant in South Konkan and Kanhoji Angre in North Konkan. North of the Krishna, Krishna Rao Khataokar held the whole country for the Mughals.[25] Of these Damaji and Krishna Rao wrought the greatest mischief, and established a reign of terror in the country. Therefore about the year 1710, Shahu deputed his newly created Senakarte against Damaji Thorat, who professed to be in the service of Ramachandra Pant, Amatya of Tara Bai, but really obeyed no authority. Accompanied by his friend Ambaji Trimbak and his family he started to reduce the freebooter. As he came within striking distance of his head-quarters, Hingangaon, where he had built a fortress, Damaji was frightened and entreated him to arrange for an amicable settlement. He invited him into his fort to discuss the terms and promised on oath, taken on Belbhandar, that he would be allowed to return in safety. The solemnity of the oath left not a shadow of doubt in the mind of Balaji and he accepted the invitation of Damaji. As soon as he entered the fortress, the freebooter broke his promise, seized him and confined him in prison. When reminded of his breach of faith, he is said to have remarked, 'What sanctity could a Bel and some Bhandar (turmeric) lend to one's words? Bel is a fruit that grows on the tree and Bhandar, we consume every day.' Having imprisoned Balaji he threatened him with the worst tortures, and ultimately with death, if a large ransom was not paid for him. Shahu apprised of these proceedings of Thorat, paid the ransom demanded, and effected the release of Balaji.[26] On the failure of Balaji, Shahu ordered Chandra Sen, the Senapati, to lead an army against him and totally crush him about the beginning of 1711. With him went his revenue secretary

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 11—13; *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 36.

Balaji Vishwanath specially charged by Shahu to keep a close watch on him. Already there was no love lost between them, for Balaji had monopolized Dhanaji's confidence in his lifetime, much to the dislike of his son. Now that he was kept as a spy on him, the degree of his resentment could be better imagined than described. The slightest incident would be enough to throw them into open hostility, and one such incident did occur in that expedition.

Quarrel between Chandra Sen and Balaji

It so happened that one day while the army was decamping, a black buck suddenly rose, and pursued by Piraji Raut, a trooper in the service of Balaji Vishwanath, entered the tent of Vyas Rao, a Brahman in the service of Chandra Sen. With a Brahman's compassion for animal life, Vyas Rao gave the beast shelter against its pursuer. And since Vyas Rao would not give it back, Piraji in a dudgeon hurled his spear at him and wounded him. Frightened at his own misdeed, and apprehending the worst consequences he went to Balaji Vishwanath, confessed his fault, and sought his protection. Balaji like a benign master promised his protection to him. Vyas Rao on his part complained to his master who came down upon Balaji, and demanded Piraji of him. To this demand, Balaji returned a flat refusal, which exasperated Chandra Sen, and he ordered his troops to attack Balaji's camp and capture Piraji Raut. Balaji however could make time to escape with a small following, but the Senapati's troops were hard on his heels. Flying before them he took shelter in the fort of Purandar, belonging to the *Sachiv*. Chandra Sen not to be thus flouted sent a peremptory demand to the *Sachiv*, for surrendering his Secretary and backed his demand by an armed attack on his fortress. The *Sachiv* feeling powerless against the Senapati, advised Balaji to escape secretly to some other place. At dead of night Balaji stole out of the fort in company with Ambaji Purandare, and about five hundred horsemen, and fled precipitately towards the banks of the Nira. Chandra Sen's men were soon on his track. He was overtaken and defeated, and was again sent flying into Pandavgad, a fort that still towers over Wai. There he felt comparatively safe, and from there he sent Ambaji Purandare to inform Shahu what had taken

place between him and his chief, and to implore the royal protection against his angry master. Khando Ballal Chitnis, a great friend of Ambaji Pant, also lent his support on the side of Balaji, and Shahu readily afforded him protection against the Senapati, and called him back to Satara. Thus was Balaji saved from the wrath of Chandra Sen.[27]

Desertion and Treason of Chandra Sen

Already disaffected towards Shahu, Chandra Sen now became furious. He bluntly wrote to Shahu that if Balaji were not given back he would withdraw his allegiance from him.[28] Shahu was in a fix, for the open rebellion of the Senapati might mean a great disaster to the country, and a great crisis for himself. But he was not prepared to be thus dictated to by Chandra Sen. He soon summoned Haibat Rao Nimbalkar, then encamped in the neighbourhood of Ahmednagar, and ordered him to chastise Chandra Sen for his insolence. Nimbalkar advanced against the Senapati, and a battle was fought at Jeur, below the pass of Andarki, in which the Senapati was worsted. Thus baffled and beaten, Chandra Sen fled to Panhala in the hot weather of 1711 and joined Tara Bai openly. The son recompensed for the desertion of the father.

This desertion of Chandra Sen created a sensation amongst the partisans of Shahu. Most of them were only playing a double game,—most of them tendered only a lip homage to Shahu to promote their own interests. Chiefs of no less importance than the Sawant of Wadi, Angre, and Khande Rao Dabhade had declared for Tara Bai. And in the very ranks of Shahu's partisans Chandra Sen was sowing sedition. His motives and activities, while he was a servant of Shahu, are clear from the following letter that he wrote to Shivaji II about August 27, 1711. 'My devotion is for the feet of the master; my desire is for the service of the master, and for reputation in his service. Rajashri Jadhav Rao (Dhanaji) knew of no other deity than the feet of the master. When there arose internal factions in the kingdom he led an army with a promise to serve the master. But there was a turn of fortune, which turned the

[27] *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, pp. 36—38; *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 28.

[28] *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 29.

heads of all. Hence to fulfil his purpose (Dhanaji's original purpose of helping Shivaji's cause) has been the sole desire of my heart, and with this idea in view, I have drawn together Rajashri Appaji Thorat, Damaji Thorat, Shahaji Nimbalkar, Santaji Pandhare and others, and without paying any heed to the temptations of Shahu, I have showed disaffection towards him. With a view to induce into this affair Khande Rao Dabhade, and the Pratinidhi, who are attached to you, I specially sent for them and had an interview with them. I also met Haibat Rao Nimbalkar. Whatever I had planned with Rajashri Thorat, Khande Rao Dabhade and Santaji Pandhare, I disclosed to Nimbalkar, who also had the same idea in his mind. Then we included all the Sardars present in our conspiracy, and held consultations with the Pratinidhi. We proclaimed you, and made rejoicings. I have sent my letters and those of the abovementioned Pandit into the fort. Now you should march upon Satara, destroy the factions, and order rejoicings.'[29] Here Chandra Sen is positive in his statement that he never felt that devotion for Shahu, which he feels for Shivaji II. Therefore he was trying to convert the Pratinidhi and Dabhade to his views, and to enlist them on Tara Bai's side. It is also evident that there were other chiefs like Haibat Rao Nimbalkar, Damaji Thorat, Appaji Thorat, and Santaji Pandhare, who shared his views and had formed a conspiracy against Shahu. They had gone so far as to proclaim Shivaji II, and had written letters to corrupt the officers of the fort of Satara. Indeed the conspiracy was formidable, when we take into consideration, the rank and resources of those who were in it. Their underhand dealings came to light only when Chandra Sen rebelled, and openly joined Tara Bai. The extreme insecurity of Shahu's position is fully realized when we note that there was not a single powerful chief on his side. The situation of Shahu was fast becoming critical, and in this crisis Balaji Vishwanath came to his rescue.

In fact these trying times revealed the real worth of Balaji. Be it said to the credit of Shahu, that he could find out the right man to meet this crisis. He was a shrewd judge of men, and therefore he now confidently turned to the Chitpavan

29 *Marathi Riyasat,* Vol. I, pp. 34-35.

Brahman. Bahiro Pant Pingle the Peshwa was of no great help to Shahu, for he was utterly incapable of handling a difficult situation.

Desertion of Haibat Rao Nimbalkar

Persuaded by Chandra Sen, Haibat Rao Nimbalkar deserted Shahu ; and thus he lost at once the services of his Senapati and of Sarlaskar, who were the chief officers of his army. Consequently his army organization suffered and with it his military strength. Shahu had only two thousand men out of the main army, that had deserted along with the Senapati.[30] Indeed Shahu's military strength was insignificant, and there was no commander-in-chief to organize an army. To the chief command of the army however he appointed Chandra Sen's younger brother Santaji Jadhav before the year was out (1711).[31] But he was not a tried hand, and Shahu was in need of a powerful army so that he might successfully cope with the combined strength of Tara Bai and Chandra Sen. Therefore he ordered Balaji Vishwanath to get one ready for the field. To recruit an army and keep it ready for action vast sums of money were necessary, and Shahu had not even a fraction of what was required.[32] Balaji realized his helplessness, but advised patience. With prompt decision he borrowed large sums of money from the prominent money-lenders like Mahadaji Krishna Naik, and recruited an army for the service of Shahu. To pay off this debt, which he had incurred on his own responsibility he got from the king an assignment of jagirs yielding twenty-five lakhs a year. Thus he prepared to meet the enemies of Shahu.

Balaji's Intrigue to Overthrow Tara Bai

On the other hand Shahu had not been paralysed by the magnitude of his danger. Recovering from his momentary despair he proceeded to deal sternly with the conspirators. The most prominent of them Haibat Rao and Chandra Sen, had deserted to Tara Bai, and there remained only Parsram Pant to reckon with. He had been set at liberty, and was

30 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 10.
31 *Selection from Satara Raja's Diaries*, Vol. I, p. 78.
32 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 39.

holding the office of Pratinidhi ever since 1710 or 1711.[33] Now his treasonable proceedings made Shahu furious, and in a paroxym of rage he ordered his eyes to be put out. As he was taken out to be blinded there came Khando Ballal rushing in, and stopped these operations. Then he went to the king and pleaded with great importunity for mercy, and got the order changed into mere confinement. The Pratinidhi was therefore put in chains, and was ordered to be kept under strict surveillance on November 20th, 1711.[34] Afterwards his house and property were confiscated. There were other conspirators like the Thorats and Santaji Pandhare but their reduction depended upon the armed operations, and Balaji's services had to be requisitioned for the purpose. Balaji was not keen upon punishing the rebels so long as Tara Bai and Chandra Sen remained uncrushed. They were the arch conspirators, and the most determined enemies of Shahu. So Balaji first proceeded to deal with them, and resolved to try diplomacy before he tried force. The astute Chitpavan Brahman endeavoured to meet intrigue by intrigue. He came to know that Ramachandra Pant, Tara Bai's Amatya and for long her chief adviser, had again been thrown out of favour, and Tara Bai now reposed confidence in her new ally Chandra Sen. However successful in her intrigues Tara Bai was a tactless and ungrateful person. Forgetting all the devoted services of Ramachandra Pant she showed distinct dislike for him, and the latter therefore intrigued with Rajas Bai, Tara Bai's co-wife and rival, to turn the tables on her. Balaji seized the opportunity and secretly joined Ramachandra Pant and Rajas Bai to crush Tara Bai. Nor did he stand alone with the two conspirators. A powerful section of Kolhapur nobles favoured the cause of Rajas Bai against her rival. But the support of Balaji Vishwanath, which meant the support of Shahu, encouraged the partisans of Rajas Bai, and they succeeded in throwing Tara Bai and her son into prison and setting up Sambhaji and Rajas Bai in their stead. Thus was brought about a bloodless revolution at Kolhapur entirely to the benefit of Shahu and much

33 *Selections from the Satara Raja's and Peshwa's Diaries*, Vol. I, p. 54.

34 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 32.

more to that of Sambhaji. Though Tara Bai was overthrown in 1712 and her son was deposed, yet Sambhaji did not ascend the throne in an official way till two years later.[35] At any rate Shahu got rid of the most implacable of his enemies. Nor was this the only result of Balaji's manœuvres. With the fall of Tara Bai, Chandra Sen was forced to leave Kolhapur. He could not hope for protection from Sambhaji, and therefore fled to Nizam-ul-Mulk, who had in the meantime been appointed Viceroy of the Deccan. He found a very agreeable master in him, and constantly urged him to make war on the Marathas.

After the overthrow of Tara Bai, Balaji undertook an expedition to reduce the power of Krishna Rao Khataokar. With him went Shripat Rao, the second son Parsram Pant Pratinidhi, then in prison. The captive father bade his son achieve success for Shahu in the campaign, win the royal favour and thereby effect his release, or get killed.[36] The young man promised to do his father's bidding, and the army advanced on the town of Khatao, fifteen miles to the east of Satara.

Balaji Crushes Khataokar

Krishna Rao, chief of Khatao, subsisted on organized plunder. He had deserted to Aurangzeb after the execution of Sambhaji, and had been awarded the jagir of the Khatao parganah. He had also got the title of Maharaja from Aurangzeb, for his meritorious services to him.[37] Later on he lived there as a servant of the Mughals. But like many others he recognized no authority, and was a freebooter of some notoriety. When he heard that Balaji Vishwanath was coming to attack him at the head of a large army, he prepared to meet him on the field. The battle was joined near his stronghold of Khatao. It was a hard-contested action, and the day was won for Shahu by the bravery of Shripat Rao and the Khataokar was killed. His two sons submitted and came to pay homage to Shahu, who graciously granted their paternal jagir to them.

35 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 40.
36 *Ibid.*
37 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 37.

BALAJI VISHWANATH APPOINTED PESHWA ON NOVEMBER 16, 1713

Thus by the end of the year the position of Shahu was comparatively secure. He had got rid of Tara Bai, Chandra Sen, and Khataokar. Parsram Pant Pratinidhi still rotted in prison and repented for his crime. But now his deliverance was near at hand. On his return from the late expedition, in which success had been achieved on account of the reckless bravery of Shripat Rao, Balaji recommended to Shahu in the strongest terms, the release of the Pratinidhi, on the score of the meritorious services of his son. Shahu relented, Khando Ballal also threw in his weight on the side of Balaji.[38] Thus persuaded Shahu released Parsram Pant and reinstated him in his office of Pratinidhi. Parsram Pant out of his gratitude to Balaji Vishwanath took the first opportunity of requiting his kindness and he ever remained loyal to Shahu.[39]

The same year, 1712, Shahu had sent Bahiropant Pingle Peshwa against Kanhoji Angre, nominally the Admiral of the Maratha fleet, but really the most powerful and independent pirate chief of the west coast. He was a partisan of Tara Bai, and now that she had fallen, Shahu wanted him to recognize his authority and pay homage to him. In fact Angre had no real sympathy with Tara Bai's cause, nor any real fear for Shahu's power. He was bred to the sea as a hereditary profession. His father Tukoji was serving under Sidoji Gujar, the head of the Maratha fleet. After Tukoji's death about the year 1690 Kanhoji took his father's place in the admiralty. He soon distinguished himself on the sea, and in 1690 he was appointed the second in command of the fleet. Towards the end of Rajaram's reign, i.e., 1698 he is mentioned to have held the office of Sarkhel, i.e., Admiral of the Maratha fleet.[40] That was the time of the Maratha war of Independence. Inspired by a burning love for his country's cause, he like many other notable Marathas vowed vengeance on the Mughals, who had seized Raigad, Anjanwel and Sindhudurg and had given them

38 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 37.

39 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 44.

40 *Marathyanche Armar*—Navy of the Marathas, p. 32.

to the Sidi of Janjira. The Sidi held the admiralty of the Mughal fleet since 1670.[41] Shivaji and Sambhaji had made several attempts to destroy him, but had failed. Now Kanhoji's one aim of life was to recover the Maratha forts in his charge, and to reduce his power on the sea. He was inexorable in his resolution and succeeded in achieving his aim to a very great extent. He worsted the Sidi on the sea, and conquered the forts of Sagargad, Kolaba, Khanderi and others from him. He roved undaunted from Bombay to Malabar, and struck terror into the hearts of the sea-faring nations, like the English and the Portuguese and the Dutch. These were the allies of the Sidi, and hence were subject to Kanhoji's relentless ravages.[42] Thus he fought all the enemies of the Marathas and stamped the dread of his power on the whole coast between Travancore and Bombay. He kept his naval stores in the forts of Suvarnadurg and Vijaydurg and made Kolaba his naval station. He respected no flag on the sea, nor feared any authority on land.

In 1707 when Shahu returned to Maharastra, he was the Admiral of the Maratha fleet under the regency of Tara Bai. In the contest between Shahu and Tara Bai, the latter anxious to enlist his sympathy and support for her son, had granted the whole of the Konkan between Bombay and Sawantwadi. But this was the time when most of the Maratha leaders found it very profitable to fish in troubled waters and loyalty was a rare virtue in Maharastra.

As has been noticed in the previous chapter he betrayed Tara Bai, when she was cooped up in the fort of Rangna. Taking advantage of the disorderly condition of the Maratha state, and of the helplessness of Shahu, after the desertion of Chandra Sen, he extended his arms, and subdued the district of Kalyan and the fortresses of Lohgad and Rajmachi all belonging to the Peshwa, Bahiro Pant Pingle.[43] Hence in 1712 Shahu ordered the Peshwa against Kanhoji and associated with him Nilo Ballal, the brother of Khando Ballal. But Kanhoji defeated them, captured and imprisoned them in the fort of

41 *Ibid.*, p. 15.
42 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
43 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 37.

Lohgad, and prepared to follow up his victory by a rapid march on the capital of Shahu. This threw Shahu into consternation, and he quickly resolved to have some capable man, on whom he could bestow the high office of Peshwa, and send him against this powerful pirate chief. Balaji had just returned from his successful campaign against Krishna Rao Khataokar. In the full flush of his victory, he must have commanded the confidence of Shahu ; and he deserved it because of the signal services that he had rendered to Shahu on many occasions. On the other hand, ever since his appointment, Bahiro Pant Pingle had displayed neither ability nor resourcefulness in any critical situation. But now the captivity of the Peshwa affected the smooth working of the government, and more than that, Shahu was in great anxiety to stop the further progress of Angre, who was fast advancing on Satara. Here was another crisis for Shahu, and he did not know what to do. Now he turned to the oldest and the most experienced of all his officers Parsram Pant, for advice. He wanted him to accept the office of Peshwa and meet the situation. Parsram Pant however suggested to him that Balaji was the favourite of the army, and it would be in the fitness of things if he was appointed to the office.[44] Shahu took the hint ; and influenced partly by a deep sense of gratitude for all his meritorious services he invested Balaji with the robes of office on November 16, 1713 at a place called Manjri. Balaji Vishwanath, both by abilities and achievements, was eminently fitted for the high office. Nevertheless he owed his appointment to the strong recommendation of Parsram Pant Pratinidhi who thus requited the good offices of Balaji Vishwanath in such a fitting manner. Balaji was granted a jagir of five mahals in addition to what he had, and was required to leave a Mutaliq or Deputy with the king. On the occasion of Balaji's installation Parsram Pant was confirmed in his office of Pratinidhi ; Ramji Pant Bhanu was appointed Fadnavis to Shahu through the influence of Balaji Vishwanath ; Naro Gangadhar became the Majmuadar ; the office of Mantri was taken away from Ramachandra Pant Punde and was conferred on Naro Ram Shenvi ; and the office of Sumanta was taken away from Mahadaji Gadadhar and

[44] *Rajwade,* Vol. IV, pp. 34-35.

bestowed on Anandarao Raghunath. Mansingh then was appointed Senapati, Hono Anant Nyayadhish, and Mudgal Bhat, Pandit Rao.[45] All these appointments were made on the advice of Balaji Vishwanath and all the officers were capable men except the Senapati. Therefore latterly the duties of Peshwa and of Senapati were discharged by the same man—Peshwa.

Peace with Kanhoji Angre: February 28, 1714

Immediately after his investiture, Balaji Vishwanath was ordered to march against Kanhoji Angre. Dark and robust, fierce and imperious, Kanhoji had struck terror in the hearts of all. Throwing Bahiro Pant Pingle and Nilo Ballal in the prison of Lohgad, he was still staying in that fortress, to remind Shahu of his careless courage. To tame such a man therefore was no easy task and no one was better fitted than the astute and intelligent, resourceful and domineering Chitpavan Brahman Balaji Vishwanath. The Peshwa collected an army of three to four thousand troops and proceeded towards Lohgad.[46] As on a previous occasion against Tara Bai, Balaji tried diplomacy before he tried force. His familiar relations with Kanhoji Angre already subsisting through correspondence now stood him in good stead. As he set out with the army he wrote to him to come and meet him on the way. Kanhoji accordingly came out and met him at Olwan near Lonawala.[47] Then they went by easy stages to Kolaba and there Balaji persuaded him to give up his defiant attitude and tender allegiance to Shahu. In a secret meeting Balaji told him, 'You and I are brothers; hence the Peshwaship is in your own house. Tell me if you would hand over the forts without fighting.' Kanhoji agreed and Balaji appointed him Surkhel on behalf of Shahu. Kanhoji further submitted to the suzerainty of Shahu and promised to abandon the side of Sambhaji. A draft treaty was drawn up on February 28, 1714 according to which Balaji promised to surrender all the forts below the ghats to Kanhoji;

45 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 17; *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 47.
46 *Ibid.*, p. 35.
47 *Ibid.*

and Kanhoji promised to surrender all the forts above the Ghats to Shahu. Kanhoji actually had ten forts and sixteen mahals, the forts being (i) Khanderi, (ii) Kolaba, (iii) Suvarnadurg, (iv) Vijaydurg, (v) Jaygad, (vi) Devdurg, (vii) Kanakdurg, (viii) Fattehgad, (ix) Awachitgad, (x) Yaswantgad, and the Mahals being (i) Bahiro Gad, (ii) Kotla, (iii) Vikadgad, (iv) Manikdurg, (v) Mirgad, (vi) Sargad, (vii) Rasalgad, (viii) Palgad, (ix) Ramdurg, (x) Khorepatan, (xi) Rajapur, (xii) Satwara, (xiii) Kamte, (xiv) Sagargad, (xv) Shriwardhan, (xvi) Manranjan.[48]

Each promised to restore the servants of the other. Every year from the Dashera till the month of Margashirsha (i.e., October to December) the Peshwa should undertake a campaign against the Portuguese and the Abyssinian in the Konkan. If Angre succeeded in recovering Raigad from the Mughals, he must hand it over to the Chhatrapati. Besides this he must surrender Lohgad, Tunga, Tikona, Korgad and Ghangad with their stores to the Peshwa ; and the Peshwa must in return restore Rajmachi and a few other forts to Angre. Further the Peshwa promised to help him against all his enemies, and to regard them as his own. These were the most significant conditions of the treaty. He further intervened to effect an agreement between Angre and the Sidi, who were at war at this time, and rescued Bahiro Pant Pingle from the prison of Angre.[49] He accompanied Balaji to Satara. Thus conciliating a powerful chief like Angre and rendering thereby a signal service to Shahu, Balaji returned to Satara by the middle of March. His arrival was an ovation for him, and never before in his life Shahu had felt greater attachment for any one. Now Shahu's position in Maharastra was unshakable, and his power and prestige unquestionable.

Importance of the Treaty with Angre

Two things resulted from this treaty with Angre : one, it established perfect amity between Shahu and Angre ; two, it involved Shahu and therefore the Maratha kingdom, in the conflicts between Kanhoji and his enemies, i.e., the Portuguese,

48 *Ibid.*, p. 25 f.n.
49 *Rajwade*, Vol. IV, p. 35.

the Abyssinians and the English. But on the whole it was not detrimental to the interests of the Maratha state. Kanhoji single-handed was sufficient to terrorize his enemies and to more than hold his own against them. Now the support of the king secured by the treaty substantially increased his strength and self-confidence. So long as he was living, Konkan was safe against all foreigners. The importance of the treaty can therefore be better realized, and the service of Balaji Vishwanath better appreciated, when we take into account the various hostile powers that had their settlements on the west coast from Bassein to Sawantwadi. In 1715 the Portuguese were supreme at Bassein, Thana, Goa and Chaul ; the English at Bombay and the Abyssinians at Janjira. Against all these Angre had to fight constantly and though he could overwhelm any one of these, he surely dreaded their combination. By the treaty all these enemies of Angre became the enemies of the Maratha kingdom, and thus the unity of interests drew him (Kanhoji) ever closer to the king of Maharastra. In one direction at least the treaty contributed to the unity of Maharastra.

Conflict between Angre and the Abyssinians

The Abyssinians were the most obstinate enemies of the Marathas. Their hostility persisted since the time of the great Shivaji. During the Deccan wars of Aurangzeb, they had helped him against the Marathas, and had thus occupied a large part of the Konkan. On the death of Aurangzeb his killedars (the commanders of the forts under him) left their charge and fled away. Thus many of these Mughal forts automatically came into the possession of the Abyssinians. The fort of Vishalgad was similarly occupied by the officers of Tara Bai.[50] In the years 1708, 1709 and 1710, the Abyssinians raided the country of the Marathas, and owing to their ravages the ryots fled from the villages. When Kanhoji Angre became powerful he made war on the Abyssinians and it still continued when Balaji Vishwanath concluded a treaty with Angre in 1714. In accordance with the terms of the treaty Balaji Vishwanath

[50] *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 82.

intervened and helped to bring about a settlement between them on January 30, 1715. It was decided that the Sidi should allow the Kamawisdars of Shahu to realize half the revenue from the villages of Goregaon, Gowel, Nizampur, Nagothane, Ashtami, Pali, Ashre and Antone, which were in the possession of the Sidi.[51] Thus was settled the dispute between the Sidi and Angre, not to the advantage of Angre alone, but to that of Shahu also.

Conflict between Angre and the English.

So long as Kanhoji Angre was the warden of the western coast of Maharastra, the Europeans lived in constant dread of him. He did not rest content with the conquest of Vijaydurg. 'He drove out the Portuguese and other traders from many a place on the west coast, fortified them and ruled actually like an independent prince. Once he captured some ships full of Arab horses, with little difficulty and thus formed a new army of cavalry. The seafarers of all nations and all races—Muhammadans, the Dutch, the Portuguese, the French and the English, honoured the blood-red banners of this pirate chief.'[52] Therefore it was the constant thought of all these people to crush the power of Kanhoji. To take his fort of Gheria was the chief concern of the English. But in the lifetime of Kanhoji they never succeeded.

On December 26, 1715, Mr. Charles Boone arrived as the Governor of Bombay and noticing that Kanhoji Angre obstructed their free movement on the coast, he vigorously set to equip a strong fleet against him. The preparation took him two years, and at the end of it he sent a squadron of nine battleships by name Britannia, Victory, Defiance, Revenge, Fame, Hunter, Hawk, Eagle and Princess Amelia, mounting 148 guns and conveying a naval force of 1,250 men, and a land force of 2,500 Europeans and 1,500 Indian sepoys. This strong squadron approached Vijaydurg on April 17, 1717, and began bombardment. But so terrible was the counter-fire of Kanhoji, and so irresistible his attack that the English were forced to retire to Bombay after a loss of 200 killed and 300 wounded.

51 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 26.
52 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 56.

But Governor Boone was not a man to be so easily discouraged. In another year and a half he got two more battleships ready and sent an expedition, this time to Khanderi. But this time also no better success attended the venture.[53] Badly beaten by Angre, the squadron withdrew to Bombay. When the news of these reverses reached the Directors they approached the king with a request for help. Accordingly Admiral Mathews was despatched from Home and reached Bombay in September 1721. Further they sought the aid of the Portuguese, who willingly gave it, and with full preparation the combined fleets sailed towards Ali Bag. Reaching Kolaba, they made a desperate attack on the fort but once again they suffered a defeat and were forced to retire.[54] After this last discomfiture the English did not venture to attack Angre ; and so long as he was living the Europeans always kept at a respectable distance from him.

Suppression of Damaji Thorat, 1716—18

After the settlement with Kanhoji Angre, Shahu ordered operations against Damaji Thorat and Udaji Chauhan. They had risen to power, as has been observed, during the troublous times of Maharastra. How Damaji outwitted the shrewd Chitpavan Brahman and then entered into the conspiracy of Chandra Sen against Shahu have also been narrated. Soon after the desertion of Chandra Sen at the same time when Shahu sent Balaji Vishwanath Peshwa to reduce Angre, he had also ordered the minor Sachiv Naro Shankar, to lead an army against Damaji. But the task of suppression could not be undertaken by Naro Shankar's mother Yesu Bai acting through her agent Ranjhekar until the year 1716. The minor Sachiv remained at Vichitragad and his army proceeded to Hingni, in the Parganah of Patas, the seat of Thorat's power. Damaji however left the charge of Hingni under his lieutenants, made a dash upon Vichitragad, surprised it and captured the young Sachiv on March 29, 1717. Then he threw him into prison and held him to ransom just as he had done on a previous occasion.

[53] *Bombay Gazetteer,* Vol. I, Pt. II, p. 8.
[54] *Marathi Riyasat,* Vol. I, p. 57.

Shahu was forced once again to pay the ransom and rescued the minor Sachiv, who had remained a prisoner of Damaji for about a year. The fact that Shahu had to ransom his officers twice from the clutches of Damaji Thorat clearly shows how weak was his power at this time. A robber chief could defy him with impunity. Even after the successful termination of the proceedings of Balaji Vishwanath, after Tara Bai was clapped in the prison at Kolhapur, Krishna Rao Khataokar destroyed, and Kanhoji Angre secured on the side of Shahu, Damaji could not be suppressed. Not until the treaty with Sayyid Husain Ali Khan in February 1718, could Shahu successfully cope with this robber chief. By the middle of 1718, the Peshwa and Pilaji Jadhav Senapati started at the head of a strong army consisting of the Marathas and the Mughal contingents supplied by the Sayyid, besieged Hingangaon, reduced the fort and carried away Damaji as a prisoner.[55] He was imprisoned in the fort of Purandar, but was released in 1719. Not learning by experience he took to brigandage and was once again chastised, captured and imprisoned in the fort of Parli, where he died in 1728.[56]

UDAJI CHAUHAN AND BALAJI

Then came the turn of Udaji Chauhan, a compeer of Thorat. He came of a heroic family of the Marathas. His ancestor Ranoji served under Maloji Ghorpade, and Ranoji's son Vithoji Chauhan in co-operation with Santaji Ghorpade captured the golden capital of Aurangzeb's camp. This deed of valour won for him the title of Himmat Bahadar from Rajaram. His son Udaji was brave like him and in the time of Tara Bai occupied Shirole, Raibag and Bijapur. When Shahu came he had established the seat of his power at Battisshirole, where he had built himself a fortress. Damaji and Udaji acted in co-operation against Shahu. Incited by Chandra Sen, they had made it their business to plunder the country as far as Satara. After the reduction of Damaji, the Peshwa turned his arms against Chauhan. But more important matters came

55 *Brahmendra Swami Yancha Patravyavahar*—Correspondence of Brahmendra Swami, Doc. 183.

56 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 62.

pressing on him and he had to put off the campaigns for some time. The Chauhan too grew less troublesome and in 1737 fled away and joined the Nizam. Balaji Baji Rao won him over and gave him a sumptuous jagir, and he served him loyally till his death in November 1762.[57] Whether against Damaji Thorat or Udaji Chauhan, Kanhoji Angre or Krishna Rao Khataokar, Tara Bai or Chandra Sen, Shahu left to himself would have been ruined. His weakness and irresolution would have aggravated the perils of the situation. Fortunately he found in Balaji that ready resourcefulness which triumphs over crises. Neither was Balaji unaware of his limitations. Wherever he knew he would fail if he resorted to force, he managed adroitly by means of diplomacy or intrigue. But in spite of his incessant activities extending over a period of six years the situation did not improve very much. There was no civil war between Sambhaji and Shahu, but there was neither amity nor co-operation. Angre had been won over to Shahu no doubt, but he ruled like an independent prince in his fiefs. He kept up only a show of submission to Shahu. Damaji and Udaji continued to give trouble and lastly Maharastra was torn by petty factions. So long as this condition continued there could be no stable government, no permanent peace. But the situation was fast changing on account of the dynamic forces operating not in Maharastra, but elsewhere round about, in the Mughal Empire.

57 *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

CHAPTER II

THE MARATHAS AND THE MUGHALS—BALAJI IN DELHI (1715—1719)

THE period extending from the death of Shivaji, to the death of Aurangzeb is a remarkable epoch in the history of the Marathas. The Marathas, fighting in defence of their country and for the honour of their nation, at last succeeded in rolling back the tide of Mughal onslaught. But when the war of defence or 'the War of Independence' as it is called, was over, their internal dissensions broke out in greater fury, and all semblance of unity—unity of authority or of interest, that had characterized their activities of that period receded to a distance. Sovereignty was divided between Shahu and Sambhaji ; the country was divided into the fiefs of the different sardars. When Balaji Vishwanath had not succeeded in making up these divisions, Maharastra was drawn most unfortunately into the vortex of the imperial politics. The attention of the Marathas was diverted from their home troubles, and they looked beyond their own country, into another which opened up golden vistas and held out promises of a glorious future for them. It is hardly true to say that just after the death of Aurangzeb the Marathas planned an aggressive warfare against the Mughals with the deliberate determination of founding an empire. For a few years after the arrival of Shahu in Maharastra they were absorbed in their domestic troubles, and Shahu himself was strongly opposed to the very idea of making war on the Mughals. They certainly never thought of founding an empire until Balaji Vishwanath and his Marathas returned from Delhi in 1719, with the first-hand knowledge of the imperial politics ; and they could not have gained this knowledge but for the violent currents and cross-currents convulsing the very core of the empire. It was by a mere chance that the Marathas befriended the Sayyids and were ushered into Delhi, where they had a glimpse of the ghastly rottenness of the empire, and the crumbling condition of the 'Prop of the Universe' (Mughal

Emperor). Here we have to trace the outlines of Delhi politics, the activities of the chief wire-pullers there, and how the Marathas were drawn into their intrigues. It will be clear at the end of the narrative how the Marathas were dazed to witness the degrading condition of the House of Taimur and unwittingly chanced upon the tempting prize of an empire.

DAUD KHAN PUNNI, THE VICEROY OF THE DECCAN (1708—13) AGREES TO PAY THE CHAUTH AND SARDESHMUKHI TO SHAHU

By the time of Aurangzeb's death the Mughal Empire was on its downward course, and his weak successors only accelerated the process. The Deccan, like all other imperial subahs, was in a welter of anarchy. When Shahu was released by Azam Shah, he had been granted the right of realizing the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the six subahs of the Deccan. Azam Shah however was killed in the battle of Jajau, and when Bahadur Shah came into the Deccan to suppress the rising of Kambaksh, Shahu rendered military service to him, in return for which he pressed for the confirmation of the rights granted by Azam Shah. But on account of the rivalry of Tara Bai, who also advanced the claim of her son to the throne of Maharastra, and to the right of realizing the Sardeshmukhi, the prayers of Shahu could not be granted. Zulfikar Khan took the side of Shahu, while his enemy Munim Khan, that of Tara Bai. At last it was decided that they must fight out their cause, and the victor should have the privileges prayed for. In grim determination they set to the task, and in 1711 Shahu's power was established in Maharastra and that of Tara Bai declined. After the overthrow of Tara Bai, Shahu commissioned his Maratha Sardars to ravage the territory of Mughals. The Deccan was again swarmed by the roving bands of the Marathas. At this time the imperial court was in a deplorable condition and was the seed-bed of all intrigues. There was no knowing as to what would happen to the Deputy Governor of the Deccan.[1] Daud Khan Punni who had been left as the Deputy Governor of the Deccan, pestered by the Marathas on the one hand, and abandoned by the Emperor

[1] Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Pt. IV, p. 57.

on the other, made the best of a bad situation, and promised to pay the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi to Shahu for the six subahs of the Deccan according to the agreement of the Emperor Bahadur Shah. But Daud Khan made it a condition that these taxes were to be collected and paid by his officer Hiraman. The Maratha generals or Shahu's officers should not rove in the country and collect these taxes.[2] Thus though Shahu had received the Farman for the collection of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi as far back as 1707, he did not succeed in realizing these till about the year 1712.

Nizam-ul-Mulk as Viceroy (1713—15) and his Proceedings

In 1713 Daud Khan Punni was transferred to Gujrat and his place in the Deccan was taken by Nizam-ul-Mulk. He plays an important part in the history of the Marathas, and indeed the Deccan politics till the year 1748 centre round the personality of this remarkable man. Hence, it will not be out of place here to add a few words about him.

Ever since the foundation of the Mughal Empire a steady stream of Muhammedan immigrants had kept on flowing into India from beyond the passes. They often migrated to India with the prospects of trade or service. But besides mere traders and service-seekers there came many a devout pilgrim into India to sail for Mecca from the Indian ports. One of such pilgrims was Khwaja Abid Shaikh-ul-Islam of Bukhara. He was the grandfather of Nizam-ul-Mulk. About the year 1655-6 he passed through India on his way to Mecca, and on his return took service with Alamgir. He rose to distinction in the imperial service, and after him, his eldest son Ghaziuddin, the father of Nizam-ul-Mulk, filled several important offices of the empire.

Mir Qamar-ud-din, son of Ghaziuddin Khan by the daughter of Shahjahan's wazir Sadullah Khan, was born on August 11, 1671. In 1683-84, when in his thirteenth year, he received as his first appointment in the services of the state the rank of four hundred Zat, one hundred horse. In the following year the title of Khan was added to his name. In

2 Khafi Khan, *Elliot,* Vol. VII, p. 466.

1690-91 he received the title of Chin Qilich Khan, and at Alamgir's death in 1707 he was Governor of Bijapur. His father and he took no part in the contest for the throne between the sons of Alamgir ; and when Bahadur Shah had succeeded in defeating his rival, he removed the Turanis from the Dakhin.' Accordingly Ghaziuddin Khan Firoz Jang was sent to Ahmadabad in Gujrat, and Qilich Khan was appointed Subahdar of Oudh and Faujdar of Gorakhpur (December 9, 1707). At the same time the title of Chin Qilich Khan was changed to that of Khan Dauran Bahadur and he was raised to 6,000 Zat, 6,000 horse. 'A few weeks afterwards (January 27, 1708) he resigned all his titles and appointments ; but at the desire of Munim Khan, the Wazir, he withdrew his resignation and was promoted to 7,000 Zat, 7,000 horse. When his father died and the deceased's property was confiscated, Chin Qilich Khan (Khan Dauran as he then was) sent in his resignation afresh, February 6, 1711 ; this time it was accepted and 4,000 rupees a year were granted for his support. Quite at the end of Bahadur Shah's reign he returned to the active list with the title of Ghaziuddin Khan Bahadur Firoz Jang. On Bahadur Shah's death, he attempted to espouse the cause of Azim-ush-Shan, who long before had promised him high office, and he had made one march from Delhi at the head of 3,000 or 4,000 men, when he heard of the Prince's death. Thereupon he discharged his men and retired into private life. Towards the end of Jahandar Shah's short reign, he was appointed to the defence of Agra. Then he and his cousin were brought over to Farrukhsiyar's interest, through Shariyat-Ullah Khan (Mir Jumla), and as a reward for his neutrality he was now made Governor of the whole Dakhin, with the new titles first of Khan Khanan, and then of Nizam-ul-Mulk, Bahadur, Fateh Jang.'[3]

Activities of Nizam-ul-Mulk in the Deccan (1713—15)

In 1713 he was appointed as the Viceroy of the six subahs of the Deccan each of which was under an Amaldar. Ambitious and unscrupulous he wanted to rule over it independently of Delhi, and he turned the troubles prevailing at

[3] Irvine, Vol. I, pp. 268—72.

the court to his own advantage. But he had to reckon with enemies nearer home. These were the Marathas who claimed the blackmail on his subahs, and until he was rid of them, he could not get a free hand in his affairs. Hence from the very start of his career in the Deccan he determined to check the growing rapacity of the Marathas. The first step was to stop the payment of the blackmail as agreed to by Daud Khan Punni, and then to rally round him all the disaffected chiefs of Maharastra.[4] Chandra Sen Jadhav had fled from Kolhapur after the overthrow of Shivaji II, to his shelter and he gave him a sumptuous jagir at Bhalki, to the north of Bidar. Another Sardar, Sarje Rao Ghatge left the service of Shahu, and joined his standard. Already there was on his side Rambhaji Nimbalkar, the Thanadar of the important outpost of Mughals, Baramati, near Poona. He became famous later on under the style of Rao Rambha Nimbalkar.[5] Besides these chieftains, he artfully won over Sambhaji to his side, on the understanding that he would support him against Shahu. Thus an imposing array of adversaries was formed against Shahu, with Nizam-ul-Mulk as its leader. When the ground plan was complete, he told the Marathas with a show of reason that he could not pay the fixed contribution, because he did not know who the real king of Maharastra was—whether Shahu or Sambhaji. His next move was to foil the attempts of Balaji Vishwanath, who tried to wipe off the Mughal authority from Poona and its neighbourhood. Balaji Vishwanath had taken decisive steps to strengthen his hold on Poona. Recovering Lohgad from Angre he had left it in charge of his tried friend Ramji Mahadev Bhanu. Mawal to the further west was entrusted to the care of Ramji's brother Hari Mahadev Bhanu. He took the fort of Purandar from the Sachiv and put it in perfect order. Thus he made Poona secure on all sides.[6] But the Peshwa had yet much to do and Nizam-ul-Mulk had not yet achieved any appreciable success, when owing to the court intrigues at Delhi he was suddenly called back after a reign of only a year and five months, and Sayyid Husain Ali was appointed to his office. That was by the end of 1714, and it upset the plans of the

4 Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 450.

5 *Rajwade*, Vol. XX, p. 72.

6 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 72.

Nizam.[7] He had hardly formed his ambitious schemes, when they came to naught. It was therefore with great resentment and disgust that he left the Deccan, and on April 4, 1715 the new Viceroy started from Delhi to assume his charge This circumstance—the transfer of Nizam-ul-Mulk and the appointment of Sayyid Husain Ali—is fraught with consequences for Maharastra. For the present it relieved Shahu and Balaji Vishwanath from great calamities, and left the country free from a determined enemy and his blood-thirsty proceedings. The regime of the new Viceroy as we shall presently see forms a landmark in the history of the Marathas.

History of the Sayyid Brothers

In the meantime were happening events at Delhi that betokened ill for the empire. It was the scene of petty jealousies and mean faction fights. The Emperor, Farrukhsiyar, had become a mere tool in the hands of unscrupulous nobles. His inability and worthlessness had made him contemptible to all. The court had become a hot bed of sedition. There were two parties, one of the Emperor, the other of the Sayyid brothers. The Emperor's party conspired to destroy the power of the Sayyids, and the king-makers' party plotted to counteract their designs. Many a time it seemed that matters would be pushed to the extreme and the Sayyid brothers would be thrown overboard. But clever and cautious as the Sayyids were, they successfully thwarted all the attempts of the Emperor and still retained their position intact. At last it was arranged that one of the king-makers should be transferred to the Deccan. Accordingly the younger and the more capable Sayyid, Husain Ali Khan, was appointed to assume the charge of the Deccan as Viceroy in 1715.[8] Before we proceed with the narrative, it will not be improper to give a brief account of these Sayyid brothers, who were called the king-makers, and who were destined to make a signal contribution to the rise of the Marathas.[9]

[7] Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Pt. IV, p. 152.

[8] Irvine, Vol. I, pp. 293—300.

[9] 'The two Sayyid brothers, who now come into such prominence, were not the mere upstarts, men of yesterday, that it was too often the fashion to make them cut to be. Besides the prestige of Sayyid lineage,

On the death of Bahadur Shah there ensued a contest for the throne between Jahandar Shah and Azim-Ush-Shan. When the latter was defeated and killed at Lahore and Jahandar Shah ascended the throne, his son, Farrukhsiyar, prepared to avenge his father's death and to make a bid for the throne. But for the help of the two Sayyid brothers, who were won over by the entreaties of their mother for Farrukhsiyar, he would have been nowhere. Indeed his cause looked hopeless even after the adherence of the Sayyids. But the worthless

of descent from the famous Barha branch of that race, and the personal renown acquired by their own valour, they were the sons of a man, who had held in Alamgir's reign first the Subahdari of Bijapur in the Dakhin, and then that of Ajmer, appointments given in that reign either to Princes of the blood or to the very foremost men in the state. Their father Sayyid Abdullah Khan, known as Sayyid Miyan, had risen in the service of Ruhullah Khan, Alamgir's Mir Bakshi, and finally, on receiving an imperial mansab, attached himself to the eldest Prince Muhammad Mauzzam Shah Alam.

'Hasan Ali Khan (afterwards Abdullah Khan Qutb-ul-mulk) and Husain Ali Khan, two of the numerous sons of Abdullah Khan Sayyid Miyan, were now men of about forty-six and forty-four years of age respectively. About 1109 H. (1697-8) the elder brother was faujdar of Sultanpur Nazarbar in Baglana, Subah Khandesh after that, of Siuni Hoshangabad also in Khandesh, then again of Nazarbar coupled with Thalner in Sarkar Asir of the same subah. Subsequently he obtained charge of Aurangabad. The younger brother Husain Ali Khan, who is admitted by every one to have been a man of much greater energy and resolution than his elder brother, had in Alamgir's reign held charge first of Rantambhor, in subah Ajmer, and then of Hindaun Biana, in subah Agra.

'After Prince Muizz-ud-din, the eldest of Shah Alam's sons, had been appointed in 1106 H. (1694-5) to the charge of the Multan province, Hasan Ali Khan and his brother followed him there. In an expedition against a refractory Biluch Zamindar, the Sayyids were of opinion that the honours of the day were theirs. Muizz-ud-din thought otherwise, and assigned them to his then favourite Isa Khan Main. The Sayyids quitted the service in dudgeon and repaired to Lahor, where they lived in comparative poverty, waiting for employment from Munim Khan, the nazim of that place.

'When Alamgir died and Shah Alam Bahadur Shah, reached Lahor on his march to Agra to contest the throne, the Sayyids presented themselves, and their services were gladly accepted. They were (Safar 1119 H. May 1707) promoted to the rank of 3,000 and 2,000 horse, respectively with a gift of kettledrums. In the battle of Jajau on the 18, Rabi I, 1119 H. (June 18, 1707), they served in the vanguard and fought valiantly on foot, as was the Sayyid habit on an emergency. A third brother, Nur-ud-din Ali Khan, was left dead on the field, and Husain Ali Khan was severely wounded. Though their rank was raised in Zul Qada 1119 H. (February 1708) to 4,000, and the elder brother received his father's title of Abdullah Khan, they were not treated with such favour as their exceptional services seemed to deserve, either by the new Emperor or his Wazir . . . . At length, by the favour of Prince Azim-Ush-Shan, Abdullah Khan on the 21st Zul Qada 1122 H. (January 10, 1711) became that Prince's deputy in the province of Allahabad. About two years earlier (11th Muharram 1120 H., April 1, 1708), the same patron had nominated the younger brother Husain Ali Khan, to represent him in another of his Governments, that of Bihar, of which the capital was at Azimabad Patna.' Irvine, Vol. I, pp. 202—5.

character of Jahandar, his disgusting vices, and revolting favouritism, had alienated many of the right-thinking persons.[10] In the battle of Agra he was defeated owing to the reckless bravery of the Barha Sayyids,[11] and Farrukhsiyar ascended the throne after executing Jahandar Shah, in February 1713.[12]

But almost from the first day of the reign there began a misunderstanding between Farrukhsiyar and the Sayyids. Farrukhsiyar soon discovered that he had forged his fetters by his own hands, and hence constantly conspired to get rid of the Sayyids. Mutual suspicions were fanned by Mir Jumla, Khan Dauran, Taqarrub Khan, and other personal friends and favourites of Farrukhsiyar.

At first the disputes ranged round two things[13]: 'The nominations to office, and the appropriation of the confiscated wealth of the Jahandarshahi nobles. A third lever for persuading Farrukhsiyar to get rid of the two Sayyids was found in his superstitious fears.' When the younger Sayyid led a campaign against Raja Ajit Singh Rathor of Jodhpur (November 1713—July 1714) because he had forbidden cow-slaughter in his kingdom and the call for prayer from the Alamgiri Mosque, had ejected the imperial officers from Jodhpur and destroyed their houses, had entered the imperial territory and taken possession of Ajmer,[14] the Emperor wrote letters to Ajit Singh secretly 'urging him to make away with Husain Ali Khan in any way he could, whereupon the whole of the Bakhshi's property and treasure would become his.'[15] But the Emperor was disappointed by the result of the campaign, which ended in a brilliant victory for the Sayyid, and a favourable treaty for the Emperor.

Next he was advised by his party to elevate two nobles of power and position, and place them on an equality with the Sayyids, so that they might be a check to the authority of the two brothers. Gradually their power should be shorn off and 'the two brothers should be caught unattended and made

[10] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, pp. 432—34; Irvine, Vol. I, pp. 192—7.
[11] *L. M.* by Irvine, Vol. I, pp. 229—33.
[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 254—58.
[13] Irvine, Vol. I, pp. 282-3.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 285.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 286.

prisoners.'[16] The two men selected to confront the Sayyids were Khan Dauran and Mir Jumla. No order was issued without their advice, and at length through the indiscretion of the palace servants the Sayyids learnt of the plots against their own life. It was rumoured that the Emperor attempted to ruin them, and from this stage the quarrel became public. It was once advised that Itimad-ud-daulah Muhammad Amin Khan should be made Wazir in supersession of Abdullah Khan, and if Farrukhsiyar had only made up his mind, he would have easily destroyed the Sayyids. Relying constantly on what others said and never taking a bold initiative in any affair, he undermined the growing strength of his party, and in fact his schemes, often reaching consummation, collapsed on account of his irresolution. At last Farrukhsiyar conceived of a plan to separate the two brothers and then to get rid of them one by one. Fortunately for him a proposal was put forward by the Sayyids themselves praying for their transfer to Bengal and Dakhin, so that they might be away from the heated atmosphere of the court. It was at last decided that Sayyid Husain Ali alone should leave the court and take over the charge of the Dakhin, on condition that Mir Jumla also was sent away to Bihar, and Lutfullah Khan who was at the root of all mischief was deprived of his rank. This condition was necessary for the safety of his elder brother Abdullah Khan, who remained at court. On the 4th of April, 1715, Husain Ali reported his departure from Delhi.[17] 'He took with him power to appoint and remove all officials and exchange the commanders of all forts in the Dakhin. Nay, a common story is that, under compulsion, Farrukhsiyar made over to him the great seal, in order that the warrants of appointment to the forts should not require imperial confirmation.' On the eve of his departure he had definitely told the Emperor, 'that in case of designs against his brother Koottub-al-Moolk, he would return to Dhely in twenty days . . . '[18]

Thus administering a threat to the Emperor and armed with all the authority necessary for independent action he left

16 *Later Mughals* by Irvine, Vol. I, p. 293.
17 Irvine, Vol. I, p. 303.
18 Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Part IV, p. 140.

for the Deccan. Hardly had he turned his back, when new plots were formed, and Daud Khan, then governor of Ahmadabad, Gujrat, was secretly instructed to resist the Sayyid to the best of his ability and if possible, to kill him.[19] The reward promised was the viceroyalty of the six subahs of the Deccan.[20] As the Sayyid marched into the Deccan Nizam-ul-Mulk passed him on the way, and burning in resentment, did not even pay a visit to him as was the binding etiquette of the court. Then came the alarming news that Daud Khan was preparing to resist him in combination with the Marathas led by Nemaji Sindhia.[21] In great trepidation Husain Ali awaited the encounter with Daud Khan, and fortunately defeated and killed him in the battle near Burhanpur on the 6th September, 1715.[22] The defeat was due to the inaction of the Marathas, who withdrew to a distance, and actually joined Sayyid Husain, when the day was won.[23] On the defeat and death of Daud Khan his belongings fell into the hands of the Sayyid and among these were found the letters sent from the court, incriminating the Emperor in the intrigue against him.

Master of the situation Husain Ali now resolved to put down the Marathas. Khande Rao Dabhade, a chief of great power, had set up a number of outposts and realized the Chauth between Surat and Burhanpur, and further claimed the same from Gujrat and the Deccan for Shahu. Husain Ali at first deputed his commander Zulfikar Beg against Dabhade, but the latter tired the Mughal soldiers by a series of rapid marches, and at length surrounded them in the mountainous regions, and cut off Zulfikar Beg with his troops.[24] It came as a shock to the Sayyid. He was not aware of the power of the Marathas, and this humiliation rankled in his heart. He made more vigorous preparation for his reduction. But Dabhade who seemed not to take notice of it went to Satara and paid his court to Shahu, who in recognition of his

19 Ḳhafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 452.
20 *Ibid.*, p. 451.
21 Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Part IV, p. 140.
22 Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 453; Iradat Khan, *Scott*, Part IV, p. 141.
23 Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, pp. 453-4.
24 *Ibid.*, p. 463.

services appointed him as the Senapati in the place of Man Singh More.[25] This elevation of Dabhade made the Sayyid more cautious, and this time he deputed his Diwan Muhakkam Singh and his own brother Saif-ud-din, Subahdar of Burhanpur, against him. But they accomplished nothing.[26] A contested battle was fought near Ahmadnagar, with indecisive results. The Mughals were harassed everywhere and it appeared as if their sway would be stamped out from the Deccan in spite of the presence of the ablest man in the empire. Shahu was not slow to take advantage of these victories. He commissioned Dabhade to levy contributions on Gujrat and Kathiawad. The news of these discomfitures suffered by the Sayyid at the hands of the Marathas elated the emperor, and he wrote urging them to make war on his Viceroy without respite.[27] This was just the thing the Marathas wanted, and encouraged by the emperor they harassed the Viceroy incessantly. But when Husain Ali was apprised of the underhand dealings of the Emperor, he completely changed his attitude towards the Marathas and recalled Muhakkam Singh to the headquarters.[28] He knew there was only one way out of it, and in utter disgust, he proceeded to make the best of a bad affair. On the advice of Shaikh-Zada Anwar Khan of Burhanpur, he opened overtures for an alliance with the Marathas and sent as his envoy Shankaraji Malhar, who had been the Sachiv in the reign of Rajaram.[29] In his old age Shankaraji had retired to Benares and thence he had gone to Delhi.[30] At this time he was in the Mughal camp as the Karbhari of Sayyid Husain Ali. Shankaraji met Balaji Vishwanath, and after a good deal of deliberation on both sides, it was decided that the following conditions should constitute the treaty :—

(i) All the territory comprising the Swarajya of Shivaji, including all the forts therein, should be handed over to Shahu.

25 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 28.

26 Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 464.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 464.

28 Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Part IV, p. 151.

29 Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 466.

30 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, pp. 29-30; Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 466; *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 49.

(ii) The portions of Kandesh, Gondwana, Berar, Haidarabad and Karnatak, conquered by the Marathas, should also be resigned to Shahu to be added to Swarajya.

(iii) The Chauth and Sardeshmukhi over the six subahs of the Deccan should be assigned to Shahu, who in return for the Chauth should maintain a contingent of fifteen thousand Maratha troops for the service of the Emperor, and in return for the Sardeshmukhi should maintain peace and order in the six subahs of the Deccan.

(iv) Shahu should not molest Sambhaji of Kolhapur.

(v) Shahu should pay an annual tribute of ten lakhs of rupees.

(vi) The mother and family of Shahu, and Madan Singh (the son of Sambhaji by a concubine) who are in the custody of the Emperor at Delhi should be sent back home.[31]

These terms were accepted as a whole, with slight changes here and there in February 1718. Shahu proceeded to act upon the treaty as soon as it was ratified by the Sayyid. But when the Emperor got it, and was requested to ratify it, he simply rejected it with indignation. Nothing was further from his intentions than that Sayyid Husain Ali should make 'peace and bind the Marathas to his interest.'[32]

Significance of the Treaty

Whatever the emperor might do, Sayyid Husain Ali had accepted it ; and his acceptance was a matter of necessity rather than of choice. The peculiar circumstances of his situation had forced his hands, and it was with great hesitation that he had concluded the treaty. It proved advantageous to him and the country got a short respite from the calamities of war which had vexed the Deccan for a long series of years no doubt, but the governors of districts and farmers of revenue were more distressed than ever as they had now three collectors in each district, one to collect the imperial revenues, another to collect the Chauth, and a third to collect the Sardeshmukhi.

[31] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 467; Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Part IV, p. 152; *Rajwade*, Vol. VIII, Doc. 78, pp. 102—8; *Rajwade*, Vol. II, pp. 30-31.

[32] Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Part IV, p. 152.

Nevertheless the treaty came as a god-send to the Marathas. Vast privileges and important demands were conceded to them. They were recognized as more or less supreme in their own country, and on account of their being entrusted with the maintenance of peace and order they automatically acquired sovereign rights. They maintained fifteen thousand troops for the service of the Emperor but at the cost of the Viceroy. This was a very profitable subsidiary alliance formed by the Marathas long before Lord Wellesley. In short, the treaty made the Viceroy dependent on the Marathas for military help and for the maintenance of peace and order. It is, therefore, a landmark in Maratha history.

The credit after all goes to the man who formulated the treaty. That was Balaji Vishwanath one of the 'most intelligent generals of Rajah Shahu' as Khafi Khan remarks.[33] Once again he rendered a signal service to his country. Shahu's position was made not only unshakable but respectable, not only in the eyes of the Marathas but of the Mughals also. His prestige was enormously enhanced after this treaty, and no less was that of Balaji Vishwanath. If Shahu was revered as a good king, Balaji Vishwanath was both revered, and regarded as the saviour of the country. Such was the significance of the treaty. It profited the Sayyid ; it won sovereign rights for the Marathas ; it enhanced the prestige of the Peshwa.

Husain Ali's Departure for Delhi

But amidst all his activities Husain Ali kept a close eye on the affairs at the imperial court. In the meantime his brother's position at Delhi had become extremely perilous. Not only had the Emperor's wrath dogged him into the Deccan ; his perfidious conduct had thrown his brother into a critical situation. Dark webs of intrigue were closing round him, and there was no knowing when he might be undone.

Between 1715 and 1717, the Emperor started on a series of hunting expeditions, of which the principal object was to form plans and find opportunities to make away with Abdullah Khan. New favourites were created. Nizam-ul-Mulk who had reasons to be hostile towards the Sayyids threw in his lot

33 Khafi Khan, *Elliot,* Vol. VII, p. 466.

with the Emperor's party and Khan Dauran and Mir Amin Khan hitherto the chief advisers of the Emperor were removed to make room for a Kashmiri favourite Muhammad Murad. Unprecedented honours were bestowed on him in almost bewildering succession, and his rapid rise disgusted many of the sober and right-thinking men. Nizam-ul-Mulk found it difficult to remain on good terms with the men of Farrukhsiyar's confidence, and withdrew to his new governorship of Muradabad in April 1717. But Muhammad Murad felt that he was not the man to encounter the Sayyids in the open. Hence he advised some of the powerful commanders to be called to the court. One by one Sarbuland Khan, Maharaja Ajit Singh and Nizam-ul-Mulk were summoned to effect the deliverance of the Emperor from the hated tutelage of the Sayyids, and each one of them, who came with high hopes, was alienated by the blind favouritism of Farrukhsiyar. Everyone's claims and everyone's abilities were subordinated to Muhammad Murad's, and hence they left the Emperor in disgust to side with the Sayyids. On August 27, 1718 the Emperor attempted to seize Abdullah Khan but failed. In September there were also dark designs against Abdullah Khan, who wrote to his brother to come back to Delhi as quickly as possible [34] (September 29, 1718).

Soon after his brother's letter reached Sayyid Husain he made ready to leave the Deccan. About November 1718 he started from Aurangabad at the head of 8,000 or 9,000 of his own troops and about sixteen thousand Marathas under the command of Khande Rao Dabhade accompanied by Balaji Vishwanath and Santaji Bhonsla.[35] The Maratha leaders 'received horses and elephants, robes of honour, and money for expenses, with many promises of future reward in addition to the release of Rajah Sambha's wife and son. These promises included ratification of the treaty for a grant of the Chauth; grant of the Sardeshmukhi, . . . and a confirmation of the hereditary Maratha territory or Swaraj.'[36] Thus reinforced by the Marathas, and his heart easy with regard to his

[34] Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Part IV, pp. 152—54; Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, pp. 469—71; Irvine, Vol. I, pp. 339—53.

[35] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 472.

[36] Irvine, Vol. I, pp. 359-60.

government of the Deccan on account of the recent treaty with them, he reported to the court that the Deccan climate did not agree with him, and that he wanted to present to the Emperor a son of the rebel prince Akbar (Aurangzeb's son) by name Muinuddin who had been captured by Raja Shahu. Farrukhsiyar ordered him to Ahmadabad for a change and to send Muinuddin to Delhi. Without paying any heed to these orders Husain Ali started for Delhi, left Burhanpur on December 14, and Ujjain on December 26, 1718.

As he approached, consternation seized the imperial court and Farrukhsiyar's schemes one by one fell through. The Emperor sent his messenger Ikhlas Khan who was supposed to have great influence with the Sayyid, to persuade him to return.[37] By the end of December 1718 he met the Sayyid at Mandu, and instead of persuading him to return filled his ears with all sorts of alarming news. Ikhlas Khan had carried a Farman from the Emperor signifying the acceptance of all the conditions of the Viceroy's treaty with the Marathas. The Emperor had further appended a message to it that though he desired much to see his Mir Bakhshi, yet it would be unwise to advise him to come to Delhi, for the Marathas might trouble his government in his absence. The clever Sayyid wrote back to say that, 'when on reaching Malwa, Ikhlas Khan had delivered to him the Farman, he had at once made ready to return. But the officers of the Mahratta Rajah, who were in his company at the head of a large force, swore that unless he remained, they could never secure the release of the Rajah's mother and brother. Now if they were to suspect him of treachery, the consequences might be dreadful.'[38] On these pretexts he disregarded the order to return. His way was made clear on account of the withdrawal of Muhmmad Amin Khan Chin from Malwa without orders. He had been posted there with the specific order to prevent the Viceroy from coming to Delhi. His withdrawal enraged the Emperor, but there was no help.[39]

37 Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Part IV, p. 155.

38 Irvine, Vol. I, pp. 361-2.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 373.

At length Delhi was entered on February 16, 1719 'with sovereign state, kettledrums beating and clarions sounding' in entire disregard of the prevalent custom. Fear seized all men great and small, and there were wild rumours afloat throughout the city. Raja Jai Singh advised Farrukhsiyar at this crisis 'to take the field and fall upon the Sayyids' and promised his whole-hearted support to him. But 'the infatuated Emperor persisted in his attempt to buy off the Sayyids by concession after concession; and a few days afterwards,[40] yielding to the insistence of Qutab-ul-Mulk, he, by a note written with his own hand, ordered Rajah Jai Singh and Rao Budh Singh to march from Delhi to their own country.' Thus he sent away his staunch adherents from his side, and now his fall was inevitable. On February 27, hot words and undesirable expressions were exchanged between the Emperor and the Sayyids in consequence of which the latter posted a strong guard round the palace, and thus had the Emperor in their custody.

'At last the fateful morning dawned on February 28, 1719. Only an hour or an hour-and-a-half after daybreak, a great disturbance arose in the city. Muhammad Amin Khan Chin Bahadur and Zakariya Khan, at the desire apparently of Husain Ali Khan, were on their way at the head of their Mughals to attend the Sayyid's darbar. As the crowd of Mahrattas in the streets and lanes near the fort impeded their progress, the Mughals began to push them forcibly on one side and open a route for the two Nawabs and their retinue.' Upon this there ensued a scuffle, in which the Marathas suffered terribly. Taken on all sides, by the Mughal troops and the city rabble, they lost about 1,500 to 2,000 men on that day along with two or three leaders of repute, Santaji Bhonsla being the chief among them.[41] Late on that day the Sayyids entered the palace, declared Farrukhsiyar deposed and set up Prince Rafiud Darajat on the throne. Then followed a scene the like of which had never been enacted in the palace of the Imperial Mughals. It came as a rude shock to the sense of loyalty of the people of Delhi, and to the Marathas who, though not loyal, yet retained a great

40 Irvine, Vol. I, p. 376.
41 Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Part IV, p. 161.

respect for the power and prestige of the House of Taimur. Poor Farrukhsiyar a prisoner in his palace was 'dragged out with great indignity' to the presence of Qutab-ul-Mulk Abdullah Khan and was ordered to be blinded in that Diwan-i-Khas where he was wont to sit in state, and at whose entrance Shahjahan has inscribed those memorable lines :—

"Agar Firdaus Bar Rooe Zamin Ast
Hamin Ast O, Hamin Ast O, Hamin Ast"

i.e., if there be a paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this. But even worse fate awaited the occupant of the Peacock throne. After he was blinded he was confined in a room above the Tirpoliya gate 'a bare, dark, unfurnished hole containing nothing but a bowl for food, a pot of water for ablutions, and a vessel with some drinking water.' Fitting paraphernalia for a descendant of the Grand Mughal indeed! He lived there, in that lonely cell for a few weeks till at last he was strangled to death on April 28, with marks of dishonour on the body. Thus ended one of the saddest episodes of the Delhi Court.

Balaji's Return to Maharastra

A few days after the accession of the new Sovereign, Rafiud Darajat, Balaji Vishwanath received in confirmation of each of the main provisions of the treaty, a Farman from the Emperor. One, dated March 13, granted the Marathas the Chauth of the six Subahs of the Deccan including the tributary states of Tanjore, Trichinopoly and Mysore. Another, dated March 24, granted them the Sardeshmukhi over the Deccan, and the third confirmed Shahu, in the possession of the Swarajya of Shivaji at the time of his death in 1681.[42] Besides these grants, the mother and family of Shahu, along with Madan Singh were released and were given over to Balaji Vishwanath.

Consequences of the Journey of the Marathas to Delhi

This journey of the Marathas to Delhi produced far-reaching consequences in their history. Besides its immediate advantages it deeply coloured the later policy of the Marathas, and came as an eye-opener to them in many respects. For long the

[42] Irvine, Vol. I, p. 407; *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 55.

Marathas, who had looked upon the imperial power and prestige with awe, witnessed at Delhi what that power actually meant. The halo of glory that surrounded the name of the descendants of Babar and Akbar, to whom the President of Fort William addressed as 'the Absolute Monarch and Prop of the Universe,' vanished into the lurid light of utter contempt when the Marathas found them reduced to mere tools at the hands of the unscrupulous courtiers, and dragged to dishonour and ignominious death. Delhi reeking with blood, courtiers thriving in machination, the Emperor an instrument of the ambitious nobles, the central authority levelled to the dust—all these revealed the realities about the Mughal Empire. Long before, their great king Shivaji had proved to his people that the Mughal army was not invincible, and the Mughal territory not inviolable. Further they had been sufficiently disillusioned with regard to the real strength of the Mughals during their War of Independence (1690—1707). Now they realized full well that the Mughal Empire was rotten to the core, that it could never sustain its pristine glory and perhaps, who knows, it might fall to the powerful blows of the Marathas: Balaji Vishwanath a shrewd man of affairs as he was, must have seen with the eyes of a statesman that the splendid structure of the Mughal Empire was tottering to its fall, and was a prize worth attempting, and worth fighting for. His other Maratha leaders must have conceived similar idea. They must have conjured up to their minds a glorious picture of Hindustan, the homeland of Hinduism and the treasure-house of Asia—a land consecrated by a thousand memories of Shri Ram and Shri Krishna so dear to the Hindu heart. This holy land, this rich country they must have thought, would be theirs, if they could but overthrow the Mughals. And then what a difference it would make to Maharastra! Maharastra, sterile and rugged, where 'nature enforces a spartan simplicity,' would flow in riches, milk and honey! The gorgeous paraphernalia of the nobles, the polished luxury of the inhabitants, their manners and customs, health and beauty, bearing and speech, all testifying to a cultured society ; the verdant plains of the Ganges and the Jumna, the flower and foliage, the delightful sun and shade,—all these must have captivated the eyes and imagination, of the rough, crude but intelligent Chitpavan Brahmin, Balaji Vishwanath.

And was this all? No. The prestige of their presence at the imperial capital, not as mercenaries, but as the allies and supporters of the *king-makers* held out to them a promise that they might some day make and un-make Emperors. Indeed it was the surest basis on which Balaji Vishwanath could confidently build his policy of founding a Maratha Empire on the ruins of the Mughal Empire. Actuated by this ambition, he took the preliminary steps when he passed through the Rajput states in order to form friendship with them. He knew that the Mughals and the Rajputs were gradually drifting away from each other. Ten years back the premier chiefs of Rajputana—of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur—had 'openly shewed their designs to fight for independence in close alliance with each other.'[43] They had failed to co-operate, and therefore they had suffered in their struggles with the Mughals. But now the disorderly condition of the empire was very favourable to their designs. And Balaji deliberately marched through their country, in order to 'help in their designs,' thus paving the way for the work of Baji Rao. Jai Singh of Jaipur, as is well known, was a great friend of Baji Rao. In 1719, Baji Rao was about twenty and Jai Singh thirty. It is possible that Baji Rao who accompanied his father might have met Jai Singh at this time, and might have won his friendship. Whatever it might be it is important to bear in mind that the Peshwa rightly foresaw the utility of Rajput friendship for the foundation of a Maratha Empire and therefore made a move in that direction.

Besides these far-reaching consequences, the journey brought immediate gain to Shahu and his government. Balaji used to get fifty thousand rupees every day from the Sayyids, and when he returned, he brought with him an amount of thirty-two lacs for Shahu's treasury. So long as he lived there was no financial stress in the government. These gains further strengthened the position of Shahu, and surrounded the name of the first Peshwa with a halo of glory. Balaji also received the Sardeshmukhi of five mahals as his reward in addition to what he possessed already. Here was another step towards the rise of the Peshwas.

Thus this journey of the Marathas to Delhi is a momentous episode in their history.

43 Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Part IV, p. 58.

CHAPTER III

ESTIMATE OF BALAJI VISHWANATH'S WORK

Karhad-Kolhapur Campaign (1718—20)

Previous to his departure to Delhi, Balaji had to reckon with certain miscreants round about Satara. They were aided in their refractory proceedings by Sambhaji of Kolhapur. They were the Thorat brothers of Aste and Paradullah Khan, a Mughal officer, who would not withdraw from Shahu's dominions even after the friendly alliance of 1718 with Sayyid Husain Ali. In September 1718 Shahu started on a campaign with Balaji Vishwanath, occupied Karhad and Islampuri, and drove out Paradullah Khan. While returning home Balaji fought a battle with Sambhaji, whom he defeated at Badgaon. After this defeat Sambhaji kept quiet for some time, but as Balaji went to Delhi,[1] he again created troubles for Shahu. When in June 1719 Balaji Vishwanath returned triumphant with the imperial Farmans, granting sovereign rights to Shahu, Sambhaji and other miscreants were silenced. On the other hand Balaji proceeded at once to give effect to the provisions of the Farmans. He actually stamped out the Mughal authority from Poona, and wrested Kalyan-Bhiundi from Ramchandra Mahadeo Chaskar in September 1719. Then he defeated and drove out Thorat brothers, who acted in conjunction with Sambhaji. Balaji's next move was on Kolhapur, which he besieged for four or five months. A battle was fought in the meantime at Urunbah on March 20, 1720, in which Sambhaji was again defeated. This time he was taught a lesson which he did not forget soon. Having thus settled the affairs, Balaji interviewed Shahu at Satara and proceeded to Saswad, where, he died on April 2, 1720. Thus died the founder of the House of Peshwas after a period of strenuous work and crowded activities. He had become old, and his unremitting toil for the good of the

[1] Document 453, Vol. III of *Rajwade*.

country had told on his health. He found the country torn with civil war, he left it peaceful and prosperous. He had won Shivaji's Swarajya from the Mughals without a battle, and impressed the imperial capital with the prestige of Maratha arms. His great service to Maharastra was that he made up its rents, and built it anew.

Review of Balaji's Work

We have sufficiently emphasized the importance of Balaji's work in the narrative. But for him the civil war in Maharastra would not have ended so soon ; but for him Shahu could not have secured his position so easily. He was a man with a remarkable tenacity of purpose. At a time when most of the Maratha chiefs were playing a waiting game, and loyalty was a rare commodity, Balaji Vishwanath evinced virtues, that at once won the confidence of Shahu and the respect of the people. He came to Shahu's help when the latter was in sore need of it. Besides this, his work could be broadly divided under three heads :—(i) Foundation of the future Maratha Confederacy ; (ii) Reorganization of the Finances and (iii) Inception of an imperial policy.

(i) Laying the Foundation of the Future Maratha Confederacy

The gradual formation of the Maratha Confederacy is a unique fact in Maratha history, and yet it does not come to the serious student as a surprise. Its root lay in the circumstances then prevailing in Maharastra. The quarter of a century's warfare of Aurangzeb bore two deadly fruits : one was the complete destruction of the nascent Maratha state, reared up by Shivaji ; the other, the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. The former gave rise to a very noxious system of jagirs in Maharastra which can be conveniently called Feudatory system ; the latter to the acquisition by the Marathas of the right of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi over the six subahs of the Deccan. The cumulative effect of these two facts transformed the nature of the Maratha state, and laid the foundation of the Maratha confederacy.

Shivaji created the Astapradhans, and paid them cash salaries. The watchwords of his government were: no jagirs, no hereditary office. The reign of Sambhaji was not a radical departure from the system of government founded by Shivaji. But a perceptible change came over the state during the regime of Rajaram. It has been already pointed out in the introduction how Rajaram pursued a policy of systematic spoliation of the Mughal territories. To effect this successfully he assigned different parts of the Deccan to his commanders, or to those who professed obedience to him. This was again the time when all semblance of Maratha government had disappeared. The Maratha commanders, thus commissioned by their chief, and burning in resentment against the Mughals swarmed the country and harassed the Mughals in every possible way. Their king Rajaram distributed different parts of the country amongst them, and allowed them to establish their headquarters and afterwards their sway there. 'With large armies they invaded the subahs of the Dakhin, Ahmadabad and Malwa for the purpose of collecting the Chauth, and plundered and ravaged wherever they went.'[2]

'Whenever the Emperor appointed a Jagirdar, the Marathas appointed another to the same district, and both collected as they found opportunity; so that in fact every place had two masters.'[3]

Out of their revenues, they paid a share to their chief. Upon them depended Rajaram, then shut up in the fortress of Jinji. The Maratha sardars acted on their own initiative, and worked to establish their sway by their own strength; except for obtaining a sanction from the king, they had nothing to do with him. They considered the different parts of the country, as their jagir, won and maintained entirely by themselves. In fact the jagir system that grew up amidst these surroundings was worse than the common one. There was some difference between the jagirs assigned by Rajaram, and those bestowed upon the nobles or servants by potentates in ordinary circumstances. Here the credit of conquering the lands assigned, went to the jagirdars. The king did not bestow on them a consolidated estate, or a land that actually belonged

[2] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 464.
[3] *Scott's Deccan*, Vol. II, p. 108.

to him. Every bit of their so-called jagir had to be conquered from, and retained against the Mughals. Thus, from the very start the jagirdars were not actuated by a sense of obedience or service, but by a strong feeling of self-interest. Because they owed no obligation to their king for their possession of a jagir, except perhaps a formal grant, they took a legitimate pride in holding them (jagirs) independent of all authorities. That is why we witness a host of jagirdars, only tendering a lip-homage to Tara Bai ; that is why the Sawants of Wadi, Kanhoji Angre, Damaji Thorat, Udaji Chauhan, Krishna Rao Khataokar, and many more Maratha chiefs paid no heed to the authority of Tara Bai or Shahu unless they were either coerced or cajoled by them. When Shahu returned to Maharastra, and was fighting for his own cause, the adherence of Parsoji Bhonsla of Khandesh, Mohan Singh of Bijagad, Ambu Pande of Sultanpur, Sujan Singh of Lambkani and many other zamindars, was a deciding factor in the struggle. These jagirdars, supported him with the ultimate motive of being left unmolested in their possessions. When Shahu actually emerged victorious he favoured not only his partizans, but those who had rendered any service during the war of succession. Afterwards, when he was firmly seated on the throne he granted fresh jagirs to those who deserved them by the merit of their services, and confirmed in their possessions those, who tendered their submission. His guiding principle in state-matters being 'Don't destroy anything old nor create anything new' he allowed things to remain as they were. Balaji Vishwanath agreed entirely with Shahu at least in so far as the distribution of jagirs was concerned. He had found out that to resume Shivaji's system was wellnigh impossible, for Maharastra was then within the grips of a civil war, disaffection of the local chiefs and hostility of a foreign foe. To make the best of a bad situation he won over the powerful chiefs by granting them new jagirs or titles. His home policy was two-fold—pacification of the country and conciliation of the nobles. He accomplished both by assigning large jagirs. It has been already noticed how he managed Kanhoji Angre by this means. At the time of his appointment to the office of Peshwa many a Maratha officer and chief received jagirs. Whenever an officer like Dabhade rendered some meritorious service to the state, as in 1717, he

was awarded a rich jagir. We can form an idea about the extent of jagirs from the following data[4] :—

1. Balaji Vishwanath Bhatt, the Peshwa.

In 1710-11, when as Senakarte, he was directed to raise an army he was given a *saranjam* worth 2,510,200. As Peshwa he further got sixteen mahals and two forts as *saranjam*. Besides, he drew a salary of 13,000 *hons* a year.[5] After his return from Delhi he received the Sardeshmukhi of five mahals as a further gift for his signal services.

2. The Pratinidhi, Parsram Trimbak, had sixteen mahals and thirty-five forts under him in 1715-16, besides his salary of 15,000 *hons* a year.

3. The Sachiv Naro Shankar had one mahal as *saranjam*, one fort and one *watan* for *sahotra*, besides an annual salary of 10,000 *hons*.

4. The Mantri had a *saranjam* and a salary of 10,000 *hons* a year.

5. Kanhoji Angre had sixteen mahals and ten forts.[6]

These are only a few of the bigger feudatories. Besides these, there were a host of others, like the Sawant of Wadi, Fatteh Singh Bhonsla of Akalkot, Kanhoji Bhonsla, Khande Rao Dabhade and others. At any rate the fact should not be forgotten that Shahu's feudatories possessed more resources than their due, and more power than what would square with Shahu's interests. Since the latter was weak, and depended upon them for his position, they always appeared more stiff-necked than they otherwise should have been. Of them Balaji Vishwanath was the worst defaulter, for he had not only huge jagirs, but nearly all the power of the state. He did not raise a finger to abolish the jagir system. On the contrary he advised Shahu to resume it, since, he represented, that the times were not favourable for the abolition of the system. And, further, it should not be forgotten that Balaji Vishwanath's intention in forming the feudatory system was not altogether unselfish. He was actuated to

[4] *Selections from the Satara Rajas' and Peshwas' Diaries*, Vol. I, pp. 42 and 45.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

[6] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 25, foot-note.

establish this system by a personal interest, and that was to increase the power and strength of his house. In other words he wanted to make the office of Peshwa hereditary in his house ; for feudatory system or hereditary jagir system is based upon hereditary office and *vice versa*. The one is inseparable from the other. Thus it is that he not only created a feudatory system but also hereditary offices.

To this was added the right of collecting the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the six subahs of the Deccan. We have seen how the treaty containing these rights was actually ratified in 1719. But before this, and indeed long before the conclusion of the treaty in 1718 with Sayyid Husain Ali, the Marathas had claimed the contribution on these two heads and had succeeded in making good their claim to an appreciable extent. Shivaji had ' claimed to be the hereditary Sardeshmukh of his country and had put forth his claim early in his career.' One-tenth of the Mughal revenue he claimed on this head. The Chauth was ' a military contribution levied by a power without being in formal occupation of the country ' and amounted to one-fourth of the royal revenues.[7] Shivaji was first to take steps in this direction. As far back as 1668 Bijapur and Golconda had agreed to pay an annual subsidy of three and five lakhs respectively to him in lieu of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi. In 1671, he imposed these taxes on the Mughal territories. Towards the end of Aurangzeb's Deccan campaign, his own officers made secret arrangements with the roving bands of the Marathas to pay the blackmail. A few years after the arrival of Shahu, Daud Khan Punni made regular payments of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi, which his (Daud Khan's) officers used to collect ; but by 1713 it was interrupted on account of the hostile proceedings of Nizam-ul-Mulk. It was not till the treaty of 1718, which was ratified in 1719 that they won recognition for the right of collecting the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from all the Mughal territories of the Deccan except the Swarajya, which comprised Poona, Baramati, Indapur, Wai, Mawal, Satara, Kasrabad (Karhad), Khatao, Man, Faltan, Malkapur, Tarla, Panhala, Ajra, Junnar, Kolhapur, Kopal, Gadag, Halyal and other districts to the north of the Tungabhadra, all the

7 Sen's *Administrative System of the Marathas*, pp. 112-3.

forts conquered by Shivaji, and the Konkan.[8] In short the Maratha king was to realize the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the six Mughal subahs of the Deccan. But the Marathas did not stop short at this official recognition of their right. Emboldened by the reverses of Aurangzeb and the deplorable state of the Empire after him they had levied contribution on some parts of Gujrat and Gondwana. On the return of Balaji Vishwanath from Delhi, the question that confronted him was how to arrange for the realization of these taxes from widely scattered territories. Further, the right of collecting the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi was conditional on the responsibility of maintaining peace and order in those territories. Hence the problem was not an easy one, and Balaji Vishwanath's perplexities increased when he discovered that the system of government reared up by Shivaji had absolutely disappeared. And, even here, the precedent created by Shivaji came to his rescue. He used to let loose his regiments on the alien territories where they used to live for eight months in the year and realized the Chauth to boot. Following his example, Balaji Vishwanath apportioned the different parts of the Deccan excluding the Swarajya to the various jagirdars or feudatories, the ministers of state or his own friends. The Peshwa himself undertook to realize the blackmail from Khandesh and parts of the Balaghat ; assigned Balgan and Gujrat to the Senapati ; portions of Gondwana, the Painghat and Berar to Senasaheb Subah Kanhoji Bhonsla ; Gangathadi and Aurangabad to the Sarlaskar ; the Karnatic to Fatteh Singh Bhonsla ; Haiderabad, Bedar and the countries between the Nira and Warna to the Pratinidhi.[9] These officials were authorized to realize the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi, to retain a fixed part for the upkeep of their establishment and send the rest to the royal treasury. In territories assigned to them they were practically independent. Except for the regular payment, they knew of no other condition of subordination. By force they realized the blackmail, appropriated to themselves a major portion of it, and took no account of the condition of the people from whom they extorted the money or of the chief for whom they extorted it. Balaji

[8] *Rajwade*, Vol. VIII, Doc. 78, pp. 102—8.
[9] *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 47.

Vishwanath had arranged for the realization of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi, but not for the maintenance of peace and order in the country. The feudatories fattened at the expense of the people, and the frequent occurrence of wars, almost nullified the only condition of their subordination to the king, viz., payment of regular tribute. They maintained big establishments, and besides possessed Watan lands in the Swarajya which were their former jagirs with regard to the newly acquired countries, and the Peshwa let them have their own way. These feudatories already so defiant in their Watan or jagir in the Swarajya, now attained to a semi-independent status. The state thus formed by Balaji Vishwanath was called later on the Maratha Confederacy. The only difference in later ages was its much wider extent, and much wider powers wielded by its various members.

(ii) Reorganization of the Finances

A necessary concomitant to this arrangement was the rehabilitation of finances. After the division of the country arose the question of the division of revenues between the king and the feudatories. As has been noticed above they had been given unlimited powers with regard to the collection of the taxes and maintenance of their authorities in the country allotted to them, because they were the men on the spot, and were the best judges of the conditions obtaining there. But they were required to remit annual dues to the royal treasury. These annual dues were a composite payment on what they realized from the Mughal subahs and from the Swarajya jagirs or Watans. From the Mughal subahs they realized the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of which the latter was a special privilege of the House of the Bhonsla, i.e., of Shivaji. Therefore the Sardeshmukhi collection went direct to the king, Shahu. There remained the Chauth over the six subahs of the Mughals and the revenue realized from the Swarajya. Let it be borne clearly in mind that a good many Watandars or the jagir-holders in the Swarajya, were the feudatories in the Mughal subahs. Hence out of what they collected from the Swarajya and the Mughal subahs, they had to pay twenty-five per cent, on the whole, to the king for the maintenance of his dignity and office. Of the rest, i.e., seventy-five per cent, which was called Mokasa, the

king assigned six per cent called Sahotra and three per cent called Nadgauda to whomsoever he pleased. The remainder sixty-six per cent of the total collection fell to the share of the feudatories who were to maintain their dignity and office thereby. But, as has been hinted above, such a system was liable to the utmost corruption, and it did become irrevocable with the lapse of time. Indeed, corruption was inherent in such a system. Right divorced from responsibility degenerated into excesses in all cases. When Balaji Vishwanath adopted measures to make good his right to the collection of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi, he did nothing for the maintenance of peace and order. He shirked this onerous duty only to give free license to the rapacity of his feudatories. In fact, to shoulder the responsibility and establish good government would have been the most efficient check to the dangerous development of the Maratha confederacy. Like the East India Company between 1765 and 1772 in Bengal, Balaji never realized the delicacy of the task. Like the former, in 1769, he simply put some artificial brakes to the ambitions of the feudatories by controlling their revenue collection. His method of control was to create wheels within wheels and to make the revenue collection much complicated, but the inherent defect of the system was not remedied. His method was like the Mughal system of creating co-ordinate authorities in the provinces, so that they may act as a check on each other. According to Balaji's system the revenue officials of the king appointed those of the Peshwa or Astapradhan, and the revenue officials of Astapradhans appointed those of other feudatories. The chief officials were the Chitnis, in charge of all correspondence, the Fadnis, the controller of accounts, and Potnis, the head of the treasury. These were posted to different parts of the country, to work under different sardars, but officially they were not subordinate to the latter. In fact they were not under the direct control of the king or Peshwa. Balaji thought that the system would work well, and at least theoretically it appeared efficient. But the faults of imitation soon made themselves felt. Indeed they were apparent on the face of it. The Mughal system worked admirably well because the Mughal government was a centralized and absolute monarchy. The Diwan and the Subahdar were co-ordinate authorities, and each was a check on the

other because each was a mere servant of the magnificent autocrat, the Mughal Emperor. If the Diwan was the head of the provincial finances, he was so during the pleasure of the king, and similarly the Subahdar. But the Maratha government was exactly the opposite of the Mughal government. It was not a centralized monarchy, it was a decentralized confederacy. Unlike the Mughal Subahdars, Shahu's feudatories were not his humblest servants, but his friends and supporters. They weilded enormous power and possessed great military strength. Further the Mughal revenue administration was a part of an organic system, and it worked in well-settled and well-organized countries. The Maratha revenue administration, on the contrary, was purely a feeding channel, like the arms of an octopus ever ready to suck its supplies from alien countries. Where the finances depended on the military power and the military power was wielded in its entirety by the Sardars or feudatories, there the latter cannot be controlled by means of a few revenue officials. There can be no co-ordination between these feudatories and the revenue officials. The latter had to serve as subordinates. Not even the king was powerful enough against these sardars. Balaji meant to remedy this defect by maintaining a strong army and punishing the Sardars when they proved refractory. But he did not live long, and even if he had lived long, the system would not have been very successful. We know Baji Rao did the same ; he defeated and killed Dabhade at the battle of Dabhai. It did not secure the desired effect. It gave rise to a deep resentment among Sardars like Bhonsla, who considered the Peshwa as one of themselves. To tighten their hold on the feudatories, the later Peshwas, e.g., Baji Rao arrogated to themselves the office of Senapati, but even this did not solve the problem. It only multiplied their difficulties and worsened the condition.

Further Balaji Vishwanath invented a novel method of maintaining the royal establishment. It has been already noticed that his scheme of revenue administration did not put into the royal treasury the whole of the net collection, but only a fraction of it. Sixty-six per cent of the collection never came to the royal treasury, it was appropriated by the feudatories ; nine per cent went to the persons in high favour with the king ; the rest twenty-five per cent only was his portion. This is a

very mischievous system of revenue administration ; for the annual revenues were disbursed without their ever coming into the treasury and without the king's ever knowing the net income of the state. Neither he nor the Peshwa could have any real control over it. But what is more significant, the king lived as a pensioner of the feudatories, expecting only his twenty-five per cent besides the Sardeshmukhi income. Military power had passed away from his hands, and by this arrangement he was made dependent on the big Sardars for the maintenance of his office. Balaji did not realize the gravity of this mistake and he further weakened the position of the king by making it a rule that the different establishments of the royal household should be maintained by different Sardars. The Astapradhans and the Sardars like Bhonsla and Angre were called upon to maintain the royal establishments by monthly payments. The Sachiv had to pay for the upkeep of the royal stables, the Pratinidhi had to pay for that of the royal stores and the Peshwa, for that of the royal palaces.[10] The officer appointed to see whether every feudatory was sending his contribution every month regularly or not, was called the Rajajnya. This arrangement rendered the king only a pensioner of the feudatories in all but name. The discredit of having thus undermined the strength of the royal authority goes to Balaji Vishwanath.

(iii) Inception of the Imperial Policy

Much circumstance has been made out of the Hindu Pat Padshahi as instituted by Shivaji, and resumed by the Peshwas with greater vigour. It simply means Hindu sovereignty, and implied to the Marathas of the 18th century Hindu Imperialism. It has the same implication for many even now. It is however doubtful whether the expansion of the Marathas which was the most striking political phenomenon of the 18th century, was Imperialism in the proper sense of the term. That their achievement was a loose confederacy of semi-independent chiefs is perfectly certain, and equally certain it is that they failed to establish a centralized administrative system, which is the mainstay of an imperialism. The genesis of the Maratha Con-

[10] *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder,* p. 66.

federacy has already been outlined, and here we shall examine whether it contained the potentialities of an empire.

The building up of an empire is a long and tedious process. It first of all requires a perfect adjustment of a number of interests and internal peace. The second requisite is the continuous creation of the sphere of influence and the gradual absorption of the states within that sphere. We have seen how Balaji Vishwanath tried to fulfil the first requirement in his own way. He tried to knit the Maratha chiefs quarrelling and ravaging, into a system of interdependence and that was the beginning of the Maratha confederacy. Thus he secured peace in the country, and avoided the clash between the interests of the king and of the powerful Maratha chiefs. For this the credit goes entirely to Balaji. His next concern was to secure a sphere of influence. That was achieved by the treaty of 1718-19, which granted to the Marathas their Swarajya, and the right of collection of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi. Within the Swarajya they exercised sovereign rights, and they realized the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the six subahs of the Deccan on the condition of preserving peace and order. The collection of the blackmail defined their sphere of influence, and tightened their grip on the country subject to the payment of the taxes. Thus the Emperor by granting these rights resigned to them a part of sovereign rights, i.e., preservation of peace and order. Vast territories round about the Swarajya paid tribute to the Marathas, and were considered as half-subjugated by them. Thus was created a sphere of influence which went on widening with every Peshwa and with the decay of the Mughal Empire. The British made similar beginnings in Bengal. But unlike the British the Marathas never evinced a willingness to shoulder the responsibilities resting on them. They extorted every pie of their due, but did not do anything for peace and justice. Hence, instead of the government getting strong with more income, it became corrupt and weak. The foundation of an empire, a stable form of government, was never laid in the proper way. Balaji remained content with the sphere of influence now secured by the sanction of the Emperor. Shivaji had originated it and had striven to secure it. Balaji cannot be credited with the originality no doubt, but his certainly is the credit to have secured for the Marathas, what Shivaji had fought

for. But how far he was aware of its defects, or corruption creeping into the system, is extremely doubtful. True it is that he was not spared long to find out the defects of the system. He returned from Delhi by the middle of 1719, and in April 1720 he died. Thus he had only a few months to experiment on affairs, and when he had hardly rushed through his experiment, for it was a very quick arrangement that he made with regard to the collection of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi, he died. Great as he was in many ways, we can only cherish a fond hope about him, that he would have devised remedies for the defects, had he lived long enough to experience them. In his lifetime they did not occur.

Let me make one point clear at the closing. Balaji Vishwanath had no other plans of founding an empire than creating a sphere of influence for the Marathas. He had certainly no scheme for the establishment of an empire on the ruins of the Mughal Empire, by means of conquest. His resources were not adequate to the task, and if he had indulged in that hopeless scheme, so early as 1719, we would have denied him any credit whatsoever as a statesman. But he never indulged in such a scheme as early as that, and it is a pity, that most of the patriotic historians attribute this to him. He might have considered that Mughal Empire was bound to fall into pieces in the near future, but this conviction did not blur his discretion. He worked quietly with humble beginnings, and left more ambitious schemes to be worked by his posterity.

Balaji Vishwanath's Family

On his death his office was given to his son Baji Rao, then a youth of twenty-two. Balaji Vishwanath had two sons and two daughters. The old Peshwa had got them all married in their childhood, according to the prevailing custom of the country. Baji Rao, born about 1698, was married to Kashi Bai, the daughter of Mahadji Krishna Joshi, the banker of the Peshwa in 1710-11. Along with Baji Rao, he married his elder of the two daughters, Bhiu Bai to Abaji Joshi, the brother of Babuji Naik Baramatikar. Chimnaji Appa was married in 1716 to Rakhma Bai, the sister of Trimbak Rao Pethe, and the last of his children Anu Bai was married in 1719 to Vyankat Rao Joshi Ghorpade, the ancestors of the chiefs of Ichalkaranji.

Balaji Vishwanath's wife Radha Bai was a very clever and accomplished lady of the house of the Barwes of Newarya. She was the head of the household, and wielded a great influence in society. She was of liberal views and affectionate in her dealings. Family legends have it, that once a mahar woman of loose morals was discovered in the house of Govind Hari Patwardhan of Poona. It created a good deal of sensation in the society, and the Patwardhans were segregated. But notwithstanding, Radha Bai took up their cause, of her own initiative invited all the Brahmins, got the expiation ceremony performed by them, and restored the Patwardhans to their former status. She died in 1753.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY REGIME OF BAJI RAO (1720—1727)

Appointment of Baji Rao

Baji Rao was invested with the office of Peshwa on the 17th April, 1720 at Masur near Karhad.[1] He was confirmed in his father's jagirs and was further granted all the *saranjam* or jagirs of Damaji Thorat.[2] It has been the hobby of historians to depict the reluctance of Shahu to this appointment,[3] but there is hardly any truth in that assumption.[4] Shahu, if nothing else was a shrewd judge of men. He had been closely watching Baji Rao, almost from his boyhood, and convinced of his great ability he had no hesitation in appointing him to the responsible office of his chief minister.[5] Baji Rao had remained constantly in the company of his father, and had even accompanied him to Delhi. Associated in the troubles and triumphs of the great Peshwa, he learnt a good deal about the

[1] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 39 fn.

[2] *Rajwade*, Vol. IV, p. 38.

[3] *Chronicle of the Peshwas*, p. 10.

[4] *Bharat Varsa*, 1899—July article 2, p. 4.

[5] "When his father died Baji Rao had attained the age of twenty and Chimnaji Appa, twelve. Karbhari Ambaji Pant Purandare held the office of Diwan. Besides, in the Brahmin party, the most prominent were Baji Bhiu Rao, Krishnaji Mahadeo Joshi Chaskar, the brother of Baji Rao's wife Kashi Bai, Bisaji Krishna Pethe, the father-in-law of Chimnaji Appa, Malhar Dadaji Barwe the rich maternal uncle of Baji Rao, Babuji Naik Baramatikar the soldier and money-lender, and Vyankat Rao Ghorpade the son-in-law of Balaji Vishwanath. In the Maratha party, the rich and powerful were Pilaji Jadhav Rao, Ranoji Sinde, Malharji Holkar, and others. Baji Rao went to Satara and met the Maharaja. Then opened the discussion about the investiture. At that time Baji Rao was very haughty and was absorbed always in the martial sports. He had no patience, which is necessary for shouldering the responsibilities of the state. Therefore many advised the king that he was not fit for the office (of Peshwa). The king however replied that Balaji Vishwanath spent his whole life working hard for the state, and enjoyed no happiness at the end. Hence Baji Rao should be immediately given the office. If he be fortunate, then he shall have the grace of God. If it appeared that he has no ability, then it should be considered later on. Thus invoking the grace of God he gave Baji Rao the robes of office. He (Baji Rao) stayed there for some time." *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, pp. 136-7.

men and affairs by personal experience. He had, besides, shown great aptitude for the calling of soldier. He rode exceedingly well, and loved fighting more than any other pursuit. Though not as learned as his father, he was no mean revenue expert. In fact at the age when young men generally contest for prizes in colleges and universities, he was fully equipped to hold the helm of Maratha affairs, and that, in the teeth of opposition of a hostile party, led by the Pratinidhi Shripat Rao who on his father's death in May 1718, had succeeded to his office in June of the same year.[6] He had strongly protested against the appointment of Baji Rao to Peshwaship.[7]

Baji Rao's greatness is seen in its proper perspective when we realize that very early in life he chalked out a policy which was at once far-reaching and unifying. He wanted to found an empire on the ruins of the Mughal Empire. He brought about the expansion of the Marathas. He created new Sardars, carved out new territories for them, and infused a new spirit into Maharastra. The centre of gravity shifted from the barren and rugged lands of the Marathas to the flowing plains beyond the Narmada.

Baji Rao's Policy

Baji Rao's policy, which developed and took shape out of Balaji Vishwanath's hazy notions of founding a Maratha Empire, received an impetus from the crumbling condition of the Mughal government. The factors rapidly transforming the face of the Mughal Empire affected the attitude of the Marathas. They were conscious of the helplessness of the Mughal Subahdars, and of their own irresistible strength. Nor was this all. The Rajputs who were the bulwark of the Mughal Empire till the time of Aurangzeb, had not only been alienated but now stretched out the hand of friendship to them. That the Rajputs were a great factor in the rise of the Marathas is often not realized in its proper magnitude. We shall presently see, what part they actually played in the coming struggle of the Marathas for the political supremacy in Northern India. Therefore in

6 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 39 fn.
7 *Chronicle of the Peshwas*, p. 10.

trying to explain the successful execution of Baji Rao's policy, we should not lose sight of two decisive factors. The first was the rapid disintegration of the Mughal Empire ; the second was the friendliness of the Rajputs. These two will be our guiding principles in the interpretation of the details that interweave the narrative.

Revolution in Imperial Politics

Baji Rao's accession to power synchronises with an important revolution in the politics of the Mughal Empire. It resulted in the change of power from the hands of the Sayyids to those of Nizam-ul-Mulk, and it was fraught with consequences for Maharastra. From the standpoint of Maratha history, therefore, it will not be improper here, to give a brief account of that revolution in the imperial politics.

The deposition of Farrukhsiyar, his murder in the prison, the subsequent nomination of two other puppets to the throne and their immediate death, and lastly Mahammad Shah's accession to the throne as a nominee of the Sayyid brothers, marked the climax of their power. The Sayyids had become so arrogant that on one occasion, Husain Ali boasted of making an emperor of any one, on whom he chose to cast his shoe. Their dreaded strength made them an object of envy to the nobility, and an object of hatred to the Emperor. The young Emperor hated them with mingled fear, but his mother who possessed tact, intelligence and a knowledge of state business[8] as few of her sex did, set to work their ruin, while she assiduously kept up an appearance of loyalty and friendliness towards them. In this she was substantially helped by Nizam-ul-Mulk,[9] for the latter was an avowed enemy of the Sayyids.

Nizam-ul-Mulk and the Sayyids

We have already seen that Nizam-ul-Mulk was superseded in the Deccan by Husain Ali Khan after a rule of less than two years, and this supersession embittered him against the Sayyids. He withdrew to his new governorship of Muradabad, and came to the capital only when called by Farrukhsiyar to aid him against the Sayyids. Since he could not work with

[8] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 485.

[9] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, pp. 488-9.

Farrukhsiyar he deserted to the side of the Sayyids, who conferred upon him the government of Patna more with the idea of securing his absence from the court than of rewarding him for his loyalty to them. Before he started for Patna however Farrukhsiyar had been deposed, and there had come about a change in their policy towards him. They now offered him Malwa, because they thought he would have no scope for his ambition in that province, on one side of which was the Deccan and on the other Akbarabad, both held by their own partisans. Nevertheless Nizam-ul-Mulk accepted the offer, but on the condition that he should not be removed again. The pledge was given, and he started for Ujjain on the 15th of March, 1719. But soon causes of differences arose, and he was recalled on the plea that it was necessary for the protection of the Deccan that Husain Ali Khan should have the charge of Malwa. Nizam-ul-Mulk was asked to choose any one out of the four provinces of Akbarabad, Allahabad, Multan and Burhanpur. Since this was a distinct breach of faith, he apprehended worse consequences and began to prepare for self-defence. But when he heard that a Farman had been sent to him conferring on him the province of Akbarabad, he set his armies in motion. Giving out that he was on his way to Sironj, he made straight for the Narmada and crossed it on the 8th of May, 1720, at Akbarpur. Across the Narmada he made an attempt to win over the garrison of the fortress of Asirgad, and succeeded in occupying it on 20th May, 1720. Three days later, i.e., on the 23rd May, fell Burhanpur into his hands.[10]

Battle of Khandwa, 19th June, 1720

This threw the Deccan, then held in proxy for Sayyid Husain by Alim Ali Khan, his nephew and adopted son, into confusion. Already the Sayyid brothers had despatched urgent orders to Sayyid Dilawar Ali Khan to follow instantly in pursuit of the Nizam, and had written to the deputy governor Alim Ali to bar his further advance. As soon as Alim Ali Khan received the letter of his uncles he began to collect an army of Marathas and new men ; and Dilawar Ali Khan had

10 Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Pt. IV, p. 173. *Surat Factory Diary*, Vol. 611 : *Diary of Monday*, the 20th June, 1720 (Bombay Secretariat Records).

made a rapid march and come within striking distance of Burhanpur. This awakened Nizam-ul-Mulk to a sense of danger, and considering Dilawar Ali Khan the more formidable of the two he decided to encounter him first. He was however fortunate enough to secure the support of Anwar Khan, Subahdar of Burhanpur and Rambhaji Nimbalkar and many of the zamindars of the neighbourhood.[11] Leaving his headquarters early in June he came to a halt at Pandhra, between Khandwa and Husainpur, where Dilawar Ali Khan had encamped. In the battle which ensued on the 19th of June he defeated and killed his adversary and plundered his rich camp. The news of his death created a consternation in the minds of the two brothers, and greatly concerned for the safety of their family, which Husain Ali had left in the Deccan in 1718 they tried to propitiate him by bestowing on him the viceroyalty of the Deccan. "Accept my congratulations," wrote Husain Ali "Alim Ali my (adopted) son, and my family propose to return to this country; kindly furnish them with an escort and see that they are not molested on the way."[12]

BATTLE OF BALAPUR, 10TH AUGUST, 1720

In the meantime Alim Ali was vigorously preparing for the ensuing combat. Besides his own troops he had a Maratha contingent sent by Shahu under Santaji Sindhia, Khanderao Dabhade, the Senapati Shankaraji Malhar, Kanhoji Bhonsla and others. Baji Rao also then campaigning in Khandesh is said to have joined Alim Ali, by the orders of Shahu.[13] Alim Ali, a youth of twenty had all the dash of an intrepid soldier, but not the circumspection of a general. His army, about 7000 strong was badly wielded.[14] He had to reckon with a man who excelled no less in intrigues, than in generalship. Nizam-ul-Mulk with his usual ability sowed sedition and distrust in the huge army opposed to him. He followed his artifice by a letter to Alim Ali in which he wrote that since he (Nizam) had been appointed governor of the Deccan it was no use opposing him.

11 Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 492.

12 Irvine, Vol. II, p. 36.

13 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 44.

14 *Surat Factory Diary*, Vol. 611: *Diary of Thursday*, the 28th July, 1720 (Bombay Secretariat Records Unpublished).

Alim Ali should retire to Hindustan as desired by his uncle. When the nobles of Alim Ali came to know of the Nizam's appointment from his letter they sought their safety by either flying to their homes or joining the new Subahdar.[15] But Alim Ali was not to be shaken from his resolve. Undaunted by the desertion of troops his young heart burned with bravery, and he marched out to give battle to Nizam-ul-Mulk at a place two or three kos from Balapur. In the third week of July took place that fatal encounter,[16] which resulted in the utter defeat of the remnant of Alim Ali's army and left him a corpse on the field. He died an enviable death, fighting bravely to the last moment.

Murder of Husain Ali, near Toda-Bhim, 8th October, 1720; Defeat and Death of his Brother Abdullah Khan

Swift camel-riders brought the news of this disaster to Agra. Overcome with grief and resentment (for Alim Ali was the adopted son of Sayyid Husain) they determined to wreak a terrible vengeance on Nizam-ul-Mulk. It was decided that the Emperor accompanied by Husain Ali Khan should proceed to punish the Nizam, while Abdullah Khan should remain in Delhi till his return. The Ajmer route being chosen, the imperial tents were sent out on the 3rd September, and on the 11th the first march was made.[17] During the course of the journey a conspiracy was hatching in the camp, at the head of which was Mahammad Amin Khan, a cousin and partisan of Nizam-ul-Mulk. He so adroitly engineered the intrigue that at the moment of its consummation Sayyid Husain had not the slightest inkling of it. A willing assassin was found in Mir Haidar Beg, who was a Sayyid like Husain Ali.[18] Accordingly on the 8th of October, 1720, when the imperial courtege encamped at a distance of two kos to the east of Toda-Bhim, they made ready for the execution of the plot. On the morning of

15 Irvine, Vol. II, p. 45.

16 *Surat Factory Diary*, Vol. 611: *Diary of Thursday*, the 28th July, 1720. The diary refers to the encounter between the Nizam and Alim Ali, with the fatal result for the latter. Hence the battle must have taken place before the 28th July. Since no mention is made about the date of the battle, it is only to be guessed. Because of this diary, Mr. Irvine's and Mr. Sardesai's date, i.e., *10th August*, appears to be wrong.

17 Irvine, Vol. II, pp. 51-52; and *Surat Factory Diary*, Vol. 611; *Diary of Tuesday*, the 4th October, 1720.

18 Irvine, Vol. II, p. 57.

that fatal day Husain Ali escorted the Emperor as usual up to the imperial camp, and while returning to his own Sayyid Haidar Beg approached him with a petition, "and crying aloud for justice on Mahammad Ameen Khan. The attendants would have driven him away, but the Ameer-al-Amra commanded them to let him approach, which he did, and presented the paper. While he was engaged in reading it, Haidar Khan drew his dagger and plunged it into his side. The Ameer-al-Amra struck the ruffian a violent blow with his foot, at the same time crying out 'Put the Emperor to death.' The shock of his motion overset the palanquin, and he fell dead on the ground."[19] Thus perished the powerful king-maker in an ignominious way, by the hands of a Sayyid like himself. Then his head was paraded through the camp, and his properties were given over to plunder. The sequel is simple enough. The murder of Husain Ali, the more capable of the two brothers took the wind out of their sails. Abdullah Khan, who heard the news on the 9th October, at once returned to Delhi, and set up another nominee on the throne. With a lavish distribution of money he enlisted large numbers of men under his banner most of whom were raw lads, and taking with him the newly-made Emperor he started to wreak his vengeance on Mahammad Shah. Early in the morning of Wednesday, the 13th November, 1720, the battle was joined at Hasanpur. It raged in all its fury throughout the day and continued to the next. On the 14th Abdullah was badly defeated and taken prisoner with the prince that he had raised to the throne. The Sayyid was thrown into prison, and lived for two years to be done to death at last by poison.

NIZAM IN THE DECCAN

The victories of Khandwa (June 19th) and Balapur (July) left Nizam-ul-Mulk master of the six subahs of the Deccan. Besides, he had been appointed viceroy by the imperial Farman. But for two months after Balapur he awaited further development of the affairs abroad in a state of suspense, for Husain Ali was coming to chastise him at the head of fifty thousand troops. While haunted by the gloomy forebodings

19 Iradat Khan, *Scott's Deccan*, Pt. IV, p. 176.

of a coming struggle with the Sayyid he lost no time to strengthen his position. He resumed his friendship with Sambhaji, Chandra Sen and other Maratha rebels. At this time Mahipat Rao the son of Anand Rao Sumant was pressing Nizam-ul-Mulk to allow him to post his officers to collect the Chauth from the adjoining district of Aurangabad, and Nizam-ul-Mulk was delaying till he heard definitely about the proceedings of the conspirators at the imperial camp. At last when he came to know that Husain Ali had been murdered in October and his brother defeated and captured in November, he abruptly changed his attitude towards Shahu. He refused to grant permission to Mahipat Rao, to appoint Maratha officers for the collection of the Chauth. But Baji Rao had anticipated Nizam-ul-Mulk and on the death of Alim Ali had congratulated the emperor and asked his agent at Delhi, to get the treaty of 1718-9 reconfirmed. It was easily effected, and on the receipt of the reconfirmation Baji Rao deputed the Sarlaskar to collect an army in Gangathadi, and realize the Chauth by force of arms. Apprized of this Nizam-ul-Mulk at once climbed down, and granted the required permission to the son of the Sumant. Though afraid to wound he was ever ready to strike Shahu ; and wherever he could manage by diplomacy he never resorted to force. As on a previous occasion, he now thought of fomenting strifes amongst the Maratha chiefs and cautiously set to work out his tortuous policy. He had agreed to respect the terms of the treaty of 1718-9 and accordingly he ought to have left Poona and Baramati to the Marathas. Poona had already been resigned to them, but Baramati was still retained by the Mughals. Hence Baji Rao forcibly ejected the Mughal officers, and took possession of Baramati. Upon this Nizam-ul-Mulk ordered Muhakkam Singh and Chandra Sen Jadhav to invade the territories of Shahu. But on account of the opportune presence of the Sarlaskar in Gangathadi, they were chased out with heavy losses.[20] Here young Baji Rao's foresight saved the situation, for it was he who had posted the Sarlaskar there. This was however the mere beginning of the Peshwa's wonderful activities. His rapidity of movement, and dispatch of busi-

20 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, p. 161; *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 42.

ness are equally remarkable. On the 4th of January, 1721, he encountered the Nizam himself near Baramati, and then sweeping through Khandesh, Surat and Rajpipla appeared on the banks of the Godavari by the beginning of the rains.[21] In the meantime the Pratinidhi had been sent into the Karnatic to bring the whole country under the Maratha sway. This fired Nizam-ul-Mulk and he marched as far as Mysore with Mubariz Khan, though orders had reached him from the Emperor to return to Delhi at once. Baji Rao did not leave him alone, and followed hard on his heels as far as Aurangabad.[22] But the Nizam had to come back quickly to obey the imperial summons, and had to leave for the North at once. Thus he was foiled in his ambition as before. His departure from the Deccan again gave a new turn to the Maratha affairs. Now Baji Rao formulated for the first time his policy of conquest, and of founding an empire on the ruins of the Mughal Empire. It is on account of this significant fact that Nizam's departure is consequential to the Marathas.

THE NIZAM AS WAZIR

Nizam-ul-Mulk arrived at Agra on the 16th of January, 1722, and a few days passed in deliberation on the charges that had been brought against him. On the 20th February there was a grand audience held by the Emperor, when " he was appointed Wazir and received the usual robe, a dagger, an ornamental pen-case and a diamond ring of great value."[23]

Nizam-ul-Mulk was beset with difficulties in his new position almost from the outset. The incompatibility of age and temperament between Nizam-ul-Mulk and the Emperor was not all. Bahadur Shah a frivolous and spoilt youth of twenty did not like the stern puritanism and seriousness of the Nizam. A man of weak character, his favourites had the entire possession of his confidence, and the Wazir found himself thwarted at every step.[24] All his salutary measures were approved of, but met with scant attention. His manners and appearance were

21 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 44; *Bharatvarsa*, July, 1899—*Pant Pradhan Yanchi Dusari Shakavali*.

22 *Rajwade*, Vol. II (Introduction), p. 14.

23 Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 518.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 518.

ridiculed in the open court, and even sarcastic remarks, made to his face. But since the old minister was impervious to these, the Emperor set to remove him by conspiracy. Soon plots and counter-plots, for which the Delhi court was so notorious, were set on foot, and the poor Nizam had to meet with a host of enemies, all the more dangerous because concealed. How he was forced at length to resign his office, and retire to the Deccan will be clear from the sequel.

Imperial Politics (1719—24)

The five years from 1719 to 1724 are a period of unprecedented confusion in the history of the Mughal Empire. In the capital four new kings were made in the course of a single year ; the two Sayyid brothers, reaching the pinnacle of glory fell to the dust, and perished ; Nizam-ul-Mulk won for himself the whole country between the Chambal and the Cauvery ; the Rajputs attained to a power, never known before ; the Jats and the Rohillas carved out independent principalities for themselves ; and taking advantage of these troubles, the Marathas embarked upon a resolute policy of aggression on the Mughal territories. After the appointment of Nizam-ul-Mulk he strove to stay the rapid disintegration of the Mughal Empire by his salutary measures, which on the one hand estranged the Emperor and on the other created bad blood between himself and the envious nobles. In such a critical situation, the support of the Emperor, would have turned the trend of affairs ; but he was neither capable nor cautious. In utter unconcern he let the affairs drift in their own way, and the consequence was most fatal.

Attitude of the Rajputs

The Rajputs were first to take advantage of this state of affairs. The houses of Jodhpur and Jaipur played a conspicuous part in Delhi politics, and by opportune aloofness or adherence they had added considerable territories to their possessions. Ajit Singh, of Jodhpur had received besides his own dominions, the governments of Gujrat and Ajmer. After the accession of Mahammad Shah, Jai Singh of Jaipur, who had resented the deposition of Farrukhsiyar, was propitiated by a large gift of money, and by the grant of Surat Sarkar. On the fall of the Sayyids he was made the governor of Agra.

Thus the country from a point of sixty miles south of Delhi to the shores of the ocean at Surat was in the hands of these two chiefs, and that was a very dangerous step, for they favoured the encroachments of the Marathas on the imperial subahs. Maharaja Ajit Singh was the governor of Gujrat between 1719 and 1721. In the year of his appointment Pilaji Gaikwad, the agent of Khanderao Dabhade to whom Balaji had assigned the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of Gujrat and Baglan, "made frequent incursions and taking Songad in the extreme south-east established there, and from this year the Mughal rule in Gujrat was doomed . . . Ajit Singh so hated the Muhammadan rule that he secretly favoured the Marathas, and strove to establish his own authority, on such portions of Gujrat as bordered on Marwar."[25] Already Gujrat had been suffering from anarchy and religious riots,[26] and with the incursions of the Marathas at the instigation of the Rajputs, the great Gujrat houses of Babis and Jhalories tried to establish their independence. When Gujrat was in this welter of anarchy, Maharaja Ajit Singh was deprived of his governorship and Haidar Quli was appointed instead.

A Reactionary Policy and Its Results

This change had been made in pursuance of a policy of reaction against that of the Sayyid brothers, who favoured the Rajputs. This new policy was really suicidal, for on the one hand the adherence of Ajit Singh was irretrievably lost, and on the other Haidar Quli's appointment proved very unfortunate. Owing to his hostility towards the Wazir Nizam-ul-Mulk, and owing to the unhinged condition of Gujrat government Haidar Quli early aimed at independence and tried to defy the imperial authority.[27] Nizam-ul-Mulk persuaded the Emperor to take prompt action. The latter was loth to interfere with a favourite officer at first, but overcome by the arguments and importunities of the Wazir he took away Gujrat from Haidar Quli and conferred it on Nizam-ul-Mulk on the 24th October, 1722. Soon after the Wazir left for Gujrat to bring the refractory governor back to allegiance. Haidar Quli

[25] *History of Gujrat, Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 301.
[26] *History of Gujrat, Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 295—300.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

prepared to resist, but since few nobles were willing to assist him, for he had been formally dismissed by the Emperor, he considered it wise to submit. As the Wazir approached Ahmadabad by the end of February, 1723, he quitted the provincial capital and fled towards Delhi. Nizam-ul-Mulk made arrangements for the government of Gujrat and leaving his uncle Hamid Khan as his deputy he returned to the court by the beginning of July 1723 Thus another result of the new policy was that Nizam-ul-Mulk added a third province to his former possessions of Deccan and Malwa. These vast possessions forming a solid block of territories between the Chambal and the Cauvery, were held in proxy for an absentee viceroy, at a time when the Maratha storm was brewing. It is a pity that none realized the importance of Gujrat and Malwa at this critical time. They were the outlying provinces of Hindustan and on their stability depended the integrity of the Mughal Empire. But by an unpardonable folly these two provinces were subjected to very frequent changes of governors. As many as ten governors were appointed during the sixteen years between 1706 and 1722. The Marathas had already begun their raids into these provinces and when they found the government weak, and the people oppressed by successive governors, whose short tenure of office naturally prompted them to fleece the people, they eagerly looked forward for their conquest—a task which was facilitated, on account of the willing allegiance of the oppressed inhabitants of the countries. It will be narrated in the sequel how the chiefs of Malwa and Bundelkhand actually invited the Marathas into their country. Indeed the Mughal Empire was on the brink of a deep chasm.

Controversy between Baji Rao and Shripat Rao

Thus while confusion and conspiracies shrouded the Mughal Empire like a pall of blighting fog, there was raging a great controversy in Maharastra. Baji Rao and Shripat Rao were confronting each other in a duel for domination in the Maratha state. The prevailing conditions of the Mughal Empire influenced each in outlining his own policy, and we shall see how Baji Rao succeeded at last in getting the better over his adversary.

Turning then to Maharastra, we notice that the departure of Nizam-ul-Mulk for Delhi at the end of 1721, brought about a change in the attitude of the Deputy Viceroy (Mubariz Khan). He openly gave out that he was not going to respect the treaty of the Sayyids, and therefore he was not prepared to pay the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi to the Marathas. When this determination of the Deputy Viceroy was communicated to Baji Rao by his agent Anand Rao Sumant, he got highly exasperated and took a sternly hostile attitude towards the Mughals. He was well aware of the conditions of the Mughal Empire. He knew on the one hand, that the Emperor was worthless ; the nobles were jealous of one another ; the government broken down ; and the army inefficient. On the other hand Maharastra, he saw, was emerging strong out of chaos. He thought, he could strengthen the Maratha state much more by a policy of open war and conquest, than by solicitations for the payment of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the Deccan. To him it really appeared annoying that the Marathas should be obstructed in their movements in the Karnatic, in Malwa, and Gujrat, and that their privileges should be repudiated. It would be more manly, he thought, to strike and impose one's own authority than to pray for certain privileges. And being a soldier by temperament, the former measure appealed to him more than the latter. He therefore sent orders to the Maratha Sardars to make raids into Malwa and Gujrat, and here he did not reckon any authority, not even that of Shahu. At this time he had a conference with Nizam-ul-Mulk between 19th February and 5th March, 1723, near Jhawwa, when the latter had come to Gujrat to drive out Haidar Quli Khan.[28] But since each concealed his real intentions, the interview practically came to nothing. These independent proceedings of Baji Rao, without reference to Shahu, were not pleasing to him, and appeared highly outrageous to the party of the Pratinidhi. Nor was this all. The party of the Pratinidhi, in opposing the policy of the Peshwa, was in full accord with the king. Shahu owing to his gratitude for the Mughals, for the kindness shown to him by Alamgir and the grant of his liberty and kingdom after the death of Alamgir, never liked the idea of fighting the Mughals

[28] *Rajwade,* Vol. II, p. 48.

or conquering their territory. The Pratinidhi and his party were averse to the policy of Baji Rao, because they thought, the time was not ripe for actual aggression. They might keep patience for some time till they have a well-ordered state and sound finances. The infant Maratha state emerging from the exhaustions of a civil war, would reel and fall flat on the ground if called upon to bear the strain of aggression and subsequently to shoulder the responsibilities of fresh conquests. They had much reason on their side, and Shahu was at one with them. He felt greatly concerned and indeed nervous at the bold attitude of the young and inexperienced Baji Rao. He wrote many a letter inviting him to a personal interview, so that he might discuss matters with him. In one he writes:

"You have written much about your loyalty but though we wrote to you several times to come to our presence, you do not seem to think of coming . . . I asked you to appoint some good man, who would act in concert with both the parties (You and Pratinidhi) in our presence but you failed to make a move in the matter. This has created a deadlock in the affairs of the state . . . Even the overtures with the Nawab (Nizam-ul-Mulk) have come to naught. Hence this suggestion to you. How many times shall we write to you that you should be on your guard about the affairs of the state and take a personal interest in them? Therefore you should come once, learn these things from us, and act accordingly. We wonder how you fail to do this, through your idleness. We do not want to do anything unless you have a personal interview with us for a few days. If we are convinced that you are unable to manage this, we shall have to think of somebody else. Then you will feel for it."[29]

Here Shahu insists on a personal discussion of the conflicting policies of the Peshwa and Pratinidhi with Baji Rao, and deals a threat that his obduracy might be punished with his dismissal. In obedience to the order of Shahu Baji Rao came to Satara and in a conference of all the ministers of state, he boldly faced his adversaries. In the council Shripat Rao strongly advocated a policy of peace towards their neighbours, because he said Maharastra was still suffering from the havocs

[29] *Rajwade*, Vol. VI, Doc. 16.

of a prolonged warfare, the finances had been ruined, the treasury was empty, and there was a powerful and capable neighbour the Nizam. It was wiser therefore to desist from aggression and concentrate on internal organization until their kingdom became wealthy and powerful. After that they could conquer countries nearer home, retake Jinji, and establish their sway over the Karnatic. When their kingdom is well ordered and the Karnatic is conquered, then alone they might think of conquering Hindustan. Baji Rao strongly protested against it, and outlined a brilliant policy of war and conquest. He said that the best way to replenish their treasury was not to waste the remaining resources in the barren plains of the Deccan, but to attack and plunder the rich provinces of Hindustan. He reminded them how Shivaji, with far less resources, had defied the Mughals at the height of their power, and had immortalized his name by achieving glorious deeds. He further "excited Shahu's cupidity by dwelling on the indolence, the imbecility and above all the wealth of the Mughals; and he stimulated his religious zeal by urging him to drive from the holy land of Bharat-Varsa the outcast and the barbarian."[30]

The arguments were pregnant with political expediency. Shripat Rao's reasons were sound, but the policy that he outlined could not be carried out at the time. It was hard to be at peace with a determined enemy like the Nizam. It was harder still to conquer the Karnatic in the teeth of his opposition. His one aim of life, as has been indicated already, was to destroy the unity and strength of the Maratha state, and then to weaken them abroad. It was in the very nature of things impossible to be at peace with him, for his interests and those of the Marathas clashed constantly. Nor was it expedient to concentrate on internal organization, for in the internal organization were involved the vital interests of Maratha sardars. To centralize the state in order that the government might be efficient and the finances sound would have multiplied the quarrels and party feelings already existing in Maharastra. It was only when the Marathas could forget their jealousies, pettiness and scramble for jagirs, that they could be bound

[30] Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, pp. 183-4; *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, pp. 61-62.

together and their divisions could be made up. And that could be done by diverting their attention to objects, that promised greater glory and richer possession. " Where nature enforces a spartan simplicity " there nothing could have greater charm than the glitter of gold, or the promise of rich possessions. Baji Rao knew that if the Marathas could not present an absolutely united front during their War of Independence, it was futile to expect them to rise as one man against Nizam-ul-Mulk, at a time when the situation was less dangerous. Therefore when he excited the cupidity of Shahu, he touched the most vital chord of his heart, and indeed of all Maharastra. Neither was it unreasonable, for that would enrich them and their country ; and with growing responsibilities, with larger conquests they might forget their jealousies and pettiness, and rise above selfishness. He was prepared to open out new possibilities for them, only with the hope that they might improve. He was prepared to feed their cupidity, for he knew it would bring vast responsibilities in its train. In introducing this policy he was actuated by two sincere hopes. One was to arouse the Marathas to a sense of the precious possibilities awaiting them that might bring wealth and power in their train ; the other was to saddle them with greater responsibilities, that would naturally root out all pettiness from their heart. Once in the annals of modern India Baji Rao held out great promises, great possibilities for the fallen Hindu race ; once he made a glorious attempt to destroy their discord. But he had reckoned without an insight into the intrinsic nature of the Hindu, the fallen of centuries, the enemy of co-operation and of discipline. Hence his brilliant policy bore a bitter fruit for the whole of India, and the Marathas, instead of name and fame won the deserving appellations of " Ghanim " i.e., enemy from the North-Indians, and " Bargi " or robber from the East Indians.

Baji Rao's Activities

Baji Rao was as good as his word, and he promptly proceeded to give effect to his policy of aggression. A year before, i.e. (1722) he had invaded Baghelkhand, and had levied forced contributions. Now in December 1723 he entered Malwa, at the head of a large army, accompanied by his lieutenants Udaji Pawar, Malhar Rao Holkar, and Ranoji Sindhia. He

defeated the Mughal governor Sayyid Bahadur Shah, and attacked the capital Ujjain. He established military outposts in its neighbourhood, and imposed the blackmail on the country up to Bundelkhand. The Bundelas were favourably disposed towards the Marathas, and hence Baji Rao encamped for some time in their country. While returning home he left Udaji Pawar at Dhar, Malhar Rao at Indore, and Ranoji Sindhia at Ujjain, as his deputies to realize the annual contributions.[31]

The Nizam back again in the Deccan

Leaving Baji Rao to carry out his new policy, let us resume the story of Delhi politics, and the tortuous proceedings of the Emperor to get rid of Nizam-ul-Mulk. He returned to Delhi after his Gujrat campaign on 3rd July, 1723, and promptly resumed his efforts to restore tolerable order into public affairs. He tried to abolish revenue-farming, bribery and Jagir system, and thus to put the finances on a sound basis.[32] But everywhere he found his efforts foiled. He exhausted his arguments, and entreaties with the Emperor, only to learn with bitter disgust that whatever he did or proposed was misrepresented until doubt and suspicion were aroused in the mind of Mahammad Shah.[33] The consequence was that Nizam-ul-Mulk ceased to take interest in the government, and proceeded on a hunting excursion to his jagirs in December 1723 on the pretext of ill-health. He left his son Ghaziuddin as his deputy in the office. Soon after he found the affairs at the court unfavourable for him, and therefore represented to the Emperor, that as the Marathas had invaded Malwa and Gujrat, it was imperative on him to take leave from the court, and retire into his subahs.[34] Without waiting for orders he started for the Deccan and reached Burhanpur in Khandesh during Ramzan (May-June) and Aurangabad, by July 1724. But even into the Deccan his enemies had preceded him. Before the Wazir reached the Deccan and could show his hand to the Emperor, he had learnt that the viceroyalty of the Deccan had been conferred upon Mubariz Khan,

[31] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, pp. 47—49.
[32] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 534.
[33] Irvine, Vol. II, p. 133.
[34] Khafi Khan, *Elliot*, Vol. VII, p. 525.

the Deputy Governor, and a substantial financial grant had been made to him in order that he might resist Nizam-ul-Mulk and kill him if possible. While encamped near Bhopal he had heard that instigated by the courtiers of Delhi and supported by the Afghans of the South, Mubariz Khan had set his armies in motion. It put the wary Nizam-ul-Mulk on his guard, and he rapidly advanced to Aurangabad which he occupied unopposed on 21st June, and awaited the dilatory proceedings of the enemy. He further applied to Shahu for help and since Shahu had been alienated by Mubariz Khan on account of his hostile proceedings, he readily consented to it.[35] Shahu ordered Baji Rao to help him, and with the combined army of the Mughals and Marathas Nizam-ul-Mulk marched out in the first week of September 1724.

BATTLE OF SHAKAR-KHEDA, 11TH OCTOBER, 1724

The decisive battle was fought after some skirmishes on the afternoon of 11th October, 1724, at a place called Shakar-Kheda situated in the Taluqa of Mehkar in the district of Buldana in the Central Provinces. Baji Rao is said to have been present in the battle at the head of 7000 to 8000 Marathas. The battle resulted in the defeat and death of Mubariz Khan and in the dispersion of his army. The Nizam followed up his victory by reducing Mubariz Khan's son and taking possession of Haiderabad by the beginning of 1725.[36]

WAZIRSHIP, AND GOVERNORSHIP OF GUJRAT AND MALWA TAKEN AWAY FROM THE NIZAM

Foiled in his attempts to encompass the destruction of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Emperor endeavoured to clip off his power. At the request of the nobles of the court whose only consolation now lay in taking their failure in good grace, Nizam-ul-Mulk was pardoned on the 20th June, 1725, and a formal rescript was issued confirming him in the government of the Deccan, and depriving him of the office of Wazir and with it the governorship of Malwa and Gujrat. Both the one and the

35 *Rajwade*, Vol. II (Introduction), p. 14.
36 Irvine, Vol. II, p. 146; *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 49.

other were bestowed upon his favourites. Thus shorn of power and resources, Nizam-ul-Mulk concentrated his attention on the Deccan, and determined to have his own way in that far-off province, unhampered by the caprices and conspiracies of the Delhi court. From this time dates the virtual independence of the Nizam,[37] and the Haiderabad state becomes a factor in Indian politics hereafter.

Policy of the Nizam

Free from the politics of Delhi, he set cautiously to make his authority absolute in the Deccan. But here he was painfully conscious of the existence of his bitter enemy the Marathas. They had gained the rights of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi over the Deccan ; they had impeded his operations in the Karnatic in 1721, on the eve of his departure for Delhi ; and only recently they had raided Malwa and Gujrat. Their raids, he noticed, had been assuming greater dimensions day by day. Twice before he had tried to sap the foundation of their strength by fomenting their mutual jealousies, but every time he had the mortification of stopping short, when he was ready to carry out his well-calculated designs. Now that he determined to remain in the Deccan, was he to resume his former proceedings or let the Marathas sweep year after year through his richest province of the Karnatic, exact the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi, and add to these the rich plunder of Gujrat and Malwa? In view of his reduced resources, after the transfer of Gujrat and Malwa to Sarbuland Khan and Raja Girdhar Nagar respectively the latter course would be indeed suicidal. It would give undue advantage to the Marathas, and bring great pressure on himself. To an astute ruler like the Nizam, the issues of the two courses were clear, and wisely for himself he chose the former, i.e., to renew his activities for stirring up strifes in Maharastra. But he knew that it would be very indelicate to show himself in true colours to the Marathas, specially after obtaining substantial help from them in the battle of Shakar-Kheda. Not even a year had elapsed since then, and the Marathas were pluming themselves on the supposed friendship

[37] Irvine, Vol. II, p. 154.

of Nizam-ul-Mulk. It would be a rude shock to them to begin hostilities at once. He was biding his time, and before long came the interference of the Marathas in the Karnatic. That was a hit at the most vital part, and the Nizam would not take it lying low. This brought about the breach between the Nizam and the Marathas which lasted for more than a decade. The ultimate triumph of the Marathas however was due to the genius of Baji Rao and now we shall pass on to outline the events that brought about this breach.

Breach between the Nizam and Shahu

On account of his military assistance in the battle of Shakar-Kheda, Shahu seemed to think that the Nizam was friendly towards him, and the latter studiously kept up a show of good will towards him. Shahu's predilections towards the Mughals, always stood in his way of judging the motives of the Nizam. Twice before he had failed to judge him rightly, and now he could never believe that the Nizam was the most vindictive of all his enemies in the south. Baji Rao however had no doubt about his dark designs, and therefore when Shahu planned the invasion of the Karnatic he did not show any great enthusiasm for it ; for he knew that the right direction for the expansion of the Marathas was the North and not the South. He had to give an unwilling assent to it, not because like Shahu he believed in the friendly professions of the Nizam, nor because he did not know that he would offend the Nizam thereby, but because he thought he would put pressure on him from the South by annexing the Karnatic, as much as he would from the North by plundering Gujrat and Malwa. Shahu was always nervous about Baji Rao lest he should give offence to the Nizam and thus bring about a breach. During the Karnatic expeditions, Baji Rao had to give assurance to Shahu that he would not offend the Nizam, and Shahu in his anxiety to keep the Nizam friendly towards him had ordered the Marathas of the North to refrain from ravaging his jagirs situated in Gujrat. But a man of affectionate nature Shahu was no statesman, and was indeed innocent of the intricate problems of diplomacy. He did not know that by invading the Karnatic he would give unpardonable offence to the Nizam.

THE KARNATIC AND THE MARATHAS

The Karnatic formed the richest part of the Deccan, and was for many years the bone of contention between the Mughals and the Marathas. Aurangzeb had striven to establish his own sway over it, but had failed miserably, owing to the incessant warfare of the Marathas. Jinji at one corner of the Karnatic was the centre of Maratha activities for about a decade. Near it was the state of Tanjore, where ruled the younger branch of the House of Bhonsla—the descendant of Vyankoji, Shivaji's half-brother. The Ghorpades were established at Gutti. Many other Maratha chieftains held outposts in the Karnatic. Belgaum, Gajendragad, Kopal, Sondur, Belari, Shire, Bangalore, Kolar, Vellore and Jinji—all belonged to the Marathas. In assigning the Saranjam lands Shahu had given Akkalkot on the borders of the Karnatic to Fatteh Singh, so that he might keep an eye on the affairs there. Now Shahu at peace with his neighbours, prosperous and secure on the throne expressed his desire to annex the Karnatic to the Swarajya according to the conditions of the treaty of 1718, as ratified by the Emperor. He also knew well that, the Karnatic was exactly the portion of the country, where the Muhammadan influence had least penetrated, and where the Maratha, and therefore the Hindu sway was most welcome. Hence he called upon his kinsman Tulaji,[38] chief of Tanjore, to help him in the project. Accordingly two expeditions were undertaken between November 1725 and April 1727.[39] The first is known as the Chitradurg or Chittaldurg expedition, the second as the Seringapatam expedition. Fatteh Singh Bhonsla was appointed to the supreme command, and was associated with Baji Rao and other Maratha Sardars, at the head of 50 thousand troops.

In the first, Baji Rao started from Satara on the 20th November, 1725, marched eastward by way of Indapur, Parenda and Pandharpur and skirting the frontiers of the Nizam, so that he might keep an eye on his movements, he passed through Bijapur, Kulburga and Kopal, and descended on Chitradurg on the 16th March, 1726. Back from Chitradurg he swept

[38] Tulaji was the son of Pratap Singh, son of Baba Sahib, son of Tukoji, son of Vyankoji, Ṣhivaji's half-brother.

[39] *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, pp. 63-4; *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 53.

through Harpanhalli and Gadag, and following a westerly route, reached Satara on the 22nd May, 1726. He spent the rainy season at Satara, and started on his second expedition on the 23rd October, 1726. In this expedition he passed through a long region to Seringapatam, levying contribution on Belgaum, Bednore and other districts on the way, and after a stay of a month at Seringapatam returned to Satara *via* Shirole and Kapsi about April 1727. Each time he was engaged for six months, and returned without gaining the advantages Shahu had anticipated.[40] For this reason Shahu demanded an explanation of Fatteh Singh on his return to Satara as to why he did not remain in the Karnatic so that he might have brought it under his sway. Fatteh Singh could not give a satisfactory answer. Baji Rao however promptly replied, that since they had not the order of the king, they did not dare to stay. Shahu became pleased and dropped further enquiries.[41] The campaign was not a success but it had created a number of enemies for Baji Rao and Shahu.

Marathas in Malwa and Gujrat

Sambhaji had been mortally offended by the Peshwa's expedition into the country between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra, which he claimed for himself. Nizam-ul-Mulk who was not prepared to yield an inch of ground in the Karnatic vowed vengeance on Baji Rao and his master. These two had made common cause and had drawn to their side others who resented the ascendancy of Baji Rao. They were the Pratinidhi, Chandra Sen, Murarji Ghorpade, Udaji Chauhan, Rambhaji Nimbalkar and Trimbak Rao Dabhade. Their activities worried Baji Rao for a considerable period of time, which he could have otherwise devoted to the welfare of Maharastra. But if the Karnatic received scant attention from Baji Rao, not so were Malwa and Gujrat. It was his settled policy to raid these rich provinces of the north and levy contributions on them by force of arms. Malwa and Gujrat have been the link between Hindustan and the Deccan from time immemorial. No empire has been built in Northern India without the conquest

40 Duff, Vol. I, p. 494.

41 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 65.

of these two provinces, and no empire has lasted even for a few years, after these two provinces have fallen off. Indian history has recorded innumerable instances, from the earliest times to this effect that the occupation of these provinces by a northern power has invariably led to its further expansion into the South ; and by a southern power to its expansion into the North. The great Mughals had been impelled by this strong under-current of historical tradition and geographical law. And now when these two provinces were overrun by the Marathas, it betokened ill, most surely for the Mughal Empire and no less for Nizam-ul-Mulk.

Malwa and Gujrat supplied food for the ambition of the Marathas even at the time of Rajaram and Tara Bai. Baji Rao overran Malwa first between 1722 and 1723, and then between 1723 and 1724.[42] Here he was substantially helped by the friendly interference of Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur. The latter was on intimate terms with Nandlal Mandloi Chaudhury of Indore, who was a very influential Zamindar, and held all the fords of the Narmada, and therefore pressed him to take the side of Baji Rao. The Chaudhury had been harassed by various Subahdars, and therefore willingly transferred his allegiance to the Marathas. It is stated with authority that Baji Rao, to whose share had been allotted the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of the province left his agents there when he raided it.[43] They were Ranoji Sindhia, Udaji Pawar, and Malhar Rao Holkar. Between 1723 and 1724 Malhar Rao established his outposts round about Indore, and Udaji Pawar occupied Dhar. By the middle of 1725 Raja Girdhar Nagar was appointed to Malwa, on account of the influence of Sawai Jai Singh, who was then the governor of Agra subah, and whose ulterior motive in securing this appointment for Raja Girdhar was to build a solid block of Hindu territories between the North and the South, between the Mughals and the Marathas, and thereby to foster the ascendancy of the Hindus (particularly of the Marathas). We will notice later on what friendly relations subsisted between Baji Rao and Jai Singh. Suffice it to say here, that Raja Girdhar did not act up to his advice, opposed his designs and

42 *Rajwade*, Vol. II (Introduction), p. 15.
43 Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 498.

coerced the powerful Chaudhury of Indore in many ways. It drove the Chaudhury into the arms of the Marathas who freed the country from the tyrannies of Raja Girdhar, and from the religious persecutions of the Muhammadans. Thus the entry of the Marathas into Malwa was made easy by the friendliness of Jai Singh, and Nand Lal Chaudhury of Indore.[44]

If in Malwa the Marathas were fortunate in getting a staunch ally, who helped them to establish their power, in Gujrat they did so by sheer force of arms. We have seen that as far back as 1719 Pilaji had established himself at Songad and levied contributions on behalf of the Senapati Khanderao Dabhade. The latter was getting old and therefore his son Trimbak Rao often discharged the duties of his office, retaining Pilaji as the agent in Gujrat. In 1723 Pilaji built several forts in the Rajpipla country, and overran a portion of the Surat Sarkar. At the same time Kanthaji Kadam invaded the country by the orders of Shahu, and realized similar contributions. " Though before this occasional demands had often been made, A.D. 1723 was the first year in which the Marathas imposed a regular tribute on Gujrat."[45] A golden opportunity was offered to them after the transfer of Gujrat from Nizam-ul-Mulk to Sarbuland Khan (about the middle of 1725). Pending the arrival of the new governor, Sujaat Khan was sent as his deputy in advance. When Sujaat Khan came to take possession of Gujrat, Hamid Khan, the deputy of Nizam-ul-Mulk would not yield without a resistance. Helped by Kanthaji who had been secured on his side by Nizam-ul-Mulk, Hamid Khan defeated and slew his antagonist, and ruled Gujrat in the name of the Nizam.[46] In return for his help, the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi over all the parganas west of the Mahi, were granted to Kanthaji. When the news of Sujaat Khan's defeat and death reached Delhi, his brother Rustam Ali Khan, the deputy governor of Surat was appointed deputy subahdar of Gujrat and was granted a requisition on Surat treasury for whatever

44 *Sastha Sammelan Vrutta*, pp. 213-14.

45 *History of Gujrat, Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I. Pt. I, p. 304.

46 *Surat Factory Diary, Vol. 612: Letter No. 69.* " We observe the account of the engagement between Geenims (i.e., Marathas) and the forces of Sujat Cawn near Ahmadabad, that the latter on the appearance of the horse under Hamed Cawn desisted from fighting and tamely permitted Sujat Cawn to be slain at the command of the other."

money he needed to equip himself and drive out Hamid Khan. In his turn he made an alliance with Pilaji Gaikwad, and proceeded to oust Hamid Khan.

Hamid Khan, supported by his ally Kanthaji fought a battle at Aras, but owing to the latter's inactivity, he was defeated.[47] But the Maratha allies of both the parties resolved to ruin Rustam Ali, who had been their bitter enemy, and actually cut him off at the battle of Pitlad. In return for this service Hamid Khan assigned the Chauth of the country north of the Mahi to Pilaji.[48] The news of Sujaat Khan's death and of Hamid Khan's grant attracted fresh bands of Maratha adventurers and they flocked into the country as to a promised land. Pilaji and Kanthaji also came at the head of a large army and laid siege to Cambay on the morning of 5th April, 1725. But there was a slight misunderstanding, which they hurriedly made up, and retired after the payment of a contribution by the city.[49] Then entered Antaji Bhaskar from the side of Idar and besieged Vadnagar, which according to an old Gujrat proverb was with Umreth, in the Kaira district, looked upon as " the two golden feathers of the kingdom of Gujrat."[50] He was bought off, by the rich Nagar Brahmans of the place. Therefore the Marathas now " spread wherever they liked far and wide in the parganah and collected sums by way of ransom, payments which they called Khandani. At Sarkhej, the better class of the inhabitants immolated their wives and children in the mode known as Jauhar, while many hundreds of highborn women threw themselves into wells or ponds to avoid outrage."[51] This sort of affair continued, interrupted only during the rains when the Marathas withdrew to quarters, till on the arrival of Sarbuland Khan in December 1725, Hamid Khan fled away with his Marathas. But the Marathas returned after a short respite and harassed the Governor on all sides. After continued pressure, and great exertions they were driven across the Mahi. But they again appeared and again spread over the country in all direc-

[47] *History of Gujrat, Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Pt. I, p. 305.
[48] Irvine, Vol. II; *Ibid.*, pp. 183-4.
[49] *Surat Factory Diary—Letters 69, 90, 91, 93 and 95.*
[50] *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Pt. I, p. 307.
[51] Irvine, Vol. II, pp. 183-84.

tions burning and plundering wherever they went. At last sick of the interminable contest Sarbuland Khan bought them off on their own terms, and granted the Chauth on all the lands on the Ahmadabad side of the Mahi. Letters were written to all the officials to give entry to the Maratha collectors, and thus he hoped he had secured peace for the people by the end of 1726. But only " a deceitful calm succeeded ; the fall of the rain brought back the cheering green, and the beautiful province of Gujrat, which for hundreds of miles, may vie with the finest parks of the nobles of England, was clothed in all its natural beauties, by rapid verdure and luxuriant vegetation. Tranquillity seemed to reign, where a short time before nothing was to be seen, but perpetual skirmishing."[52] But this calm, this tranquillity was doomed to be disturbed, for in 1727 Baji Rao deputed his agent into Gujrat and commissioned him to drive out Pilaji, Trimbak Rao's agent. Thus were the ravages renewed, and Dabhade resented the step when Baji Rao went further and negotiated with Sarbuland Khan " that if one-fourth and one-tenth shares in the revenue of the province were granted to him he would protect Gujrat from other invaders " the breach between him and the Peshwa was complete. Another enemy had thus been created by Baji Rao.

Since on all sides of Nizam-ul-Mulk were Baji Rao's Marathas, plundering and ravaging the whole country between the Tungabhadra and the Mahi, the Nizam could not keep peace. Two persons—Nizam and Sambhaji, whose interests had suffered by the invasions of the Karnatic now made common cause against Baji Rao and opened a war, that lasted for about four years from 1727 to 1731. To their number was added another Trimbak Rao, whose interests in Gujrat had been rudely interfered with, and who therefore could not forgive Baji Rao. So just as on all sides of the Nizam were Baji Rao's Marathas, so on all sides of Baji Rao were the Nizam's allies.

52 Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 493.

CHAPTER V

A PERIOD OF STRUGGLE—BAJI RAO'S ULTIMATE TRIUMPH (1727—1731)

NATURE OF THE CONTEST

FOR four years Nizam-ul-Mulk stirred up strifes through one agency or another, and kept the hands of Baji Rao full with the troubles at home. During these years he could not give effect to his policy, all his time being taken up by his struggle with the Nizam. But when he emerged triumphant out of this contest the fact had been driven home to the heart of the Marathas that the time was ripe for their expansion, and that that was to be effected by means nothing short of aggression. Indeed every one felt that Baji Rao's policy was the only solution of their trouble. Even his greatest opponent Shripat Rao Pratinidhi had veered round to his viewpoint. The Nizam had conceived such a wholesome respect for the ability of his youthful adversary, that he refrained from creating further troubles. Shahu who had always apprehended rashness in the measures of his young and inexperienced Peshwa, placed implicit confidence in him, and was confirmed in his conviction that Baji Rao alone could best control the affairs of the state without prejudice to his dignity and prestige. That was the upshot of this contest between the Nizam and Baji Rao.

PHASES OF THE CONTEST

The contest originated out of the Karnatic expeditions. But when the issues had been decided between Baji Rao and the Nizam, the civil strifes did not cease. The Nizam was not only fighting for his own ends ; he was continuously inciting a number of Maratha chieftains, hostile to Baji Rao, to secure their own interests against the grasping hand of the Peshwa. He even tried to create division between Shahu and Baji Rao by advising the former to shake off the hated tutelage of the Chitpavan Brahmins. He had given jagirs to several of the Maratha leaders, and had secured them to his own interest. The result

was that after the main part of the contest was over there ensued another, between Shahu and Sambhaji, and yet another between Baji Rao and Trimbak Rao Dabhade. The Nizam, Sambhaji, and Trimbak Rao, had made common cause against Shahu and Baji Rao, but they failed partly owing to their lack of co-operation, and partly owing to the genius of Baji Rao. This period of four years, 1727—31 therefore falls into three distinct phases. The first was the contest between Baji Rao and the Nizam ; the second between Shahu and Sambhaji of Kolhapur, and the third between Baji Rao and Dabhade.

First Phase : Contest between Baji Rao and the Nizam

The Nizam was studiously slow and cautious in unfolding his dark designs against Shahu. His first move was to transfer his capital from Aurangabad to Haiderabad, which would be nearer the Karnatic, and from where he could better control the activities of the Marathas in that region. That was not all. At Haiderabad he would be farther away from Satara, and there he would keep his movements better concealed than if he were at Aurangabad.[1] This he must have effected in the year 1726, and since then Haiderabad became the capital of the Deccan. But mere transfer of the capital would avail him nothing ; for the Marathas were ubiquitous in their activities, and Maratha Mokassadars or tax-collectors had been posted throughout the six subahs of the Deccan. To rid Haiderabad and its adjoining districts of these tax-collectors, whose presence was a perennial humiliation to him and who kept the Maratha authorities at home constantly informed of his proceedings, he proposed a barter to the Pratinidhi, whose pronounced notions of maintaining peace with the neighbours, made him all the more agreeable to the Nizam. Taking the opportunity of Baji Rao's absence in the Karnatic expedition he proposed to the Pratinidhi, that since he felt the presence of the Maratha tax-collectors in Haiderabad district humiliating to his dignity, he was ready to make annual payment of an equivalent sum of money to the Marathas, provided they never entered Haiderabad. In lieu of this annual payment, he assigned a substantial jagir in the subah of Berar to the Pratinidhi and an estate near Baramati to Shahu.

[1] Grant Duff, Vol. I, pp. 496-7. Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, pp. 187-8.

When Shahu referred the matter to his advisers, all except Baji Rao gave their assent to it. Baji Rao alone resented the measure, but Shahu would not listen to him, and tried to pacify Baji Rao with the assurance that the Nizam's withdrawal to Haiderabad was advantageous to them. The Peshwa, however, shifted to Poona in disgust. Thus while the Nizam accomplished his own end, he felt immense satisfaction to have accentuated the division in the court between Baji Rao and Shripat Rao.

Next he sedulously set to fan the jealousy of Sambhaji against Shahu. He had been sufficiently alarmed by the Karnatic expeditions, for he considered the country between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra as his own, and thought that it was rapacious of Shahu to grasp at that part of the country, when his (Shahu's) officers were fast spreading in the north and levying contributions on Malwa and Gujrat. But he alone was helpless. Therefore he took recourse to the Nizam, and resumed his former negotiations with him. Here he found a willing mediator in Chandrasen Jadhav, the sworn enemy of Shahu and the Peshwas. It was indeed with some mortification that Chandrasen had viewed peaceful relations established between Shahu and Nizam-ul-Mulk. Now he waxed jocund at the resumption of the intrigues between Sambhaji and the Nizam against Shahu, and offered his own services for it.[2] As early as February 1726, we have evidence of the beginning of their intrigues, in the form of correspondence between Chandrasen and Sambhaji.[3] Preliminary negotiations over, Sambhaji actually left his government in charge of his mother Rajas Bai in September 1726, and kept in the company of the Nizam till 1728. The Nizam promised his help to Sambhaji and instigated him to claim half of the Swarajya from Shahu. While he was openly championing the cause of Sambhaji, he gave out with a show of reason that until the claims of the two princes were definitely settled, it would be unfair on his part to pay the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi to Shahu and his officers.[4] After this the Nizam showed himself in true colours, and it came as a shock to Shahu.

[2] Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 184.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 183.
[4] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 55.

Nizam's Hostilities

In November 1726, after the departure of the Peshwa and Senapati for the Karnatic, the Nizam opened hostilities against Shahu. The latter, aware of his attitude soon sent an order on the 19th November to Sultanji Nimbalkar, for an immediate convoy of two to three thousand Maratha horse.[5] But so quick was the blow, the Nizam had aimed at him, that Shahu did not get time to be on his guard. Iwaz Khan, a commander of the Nizam made a sudden attack on Kanhoji Bhonsla and inflicted a severe defeat on him. It was only when Fatteh Singh Bhonsla, Naro Ram, and Chimnaji Damodar hurried from Gulbarga to the rescue of Kanhoji that Iwaz Khan was forced to retreat. But in the meantime Sambhaji had joined the Nizam, and both had made a move to put spirit into the campaign. Chimnaji Damodar, who was wavering in his loyalty to Shahu, was won over by Sambhaji and he later on, was made his Peshwa. On the 18th of February, 1727, the Nizam and Sambhaji were encamped in Poona, and many are the deeds of grant bestowed on various persons, by Sambhaji from there. So terrified was Shahu at this time that he sent urgent orders to Kanthaji Kadam, Pilaji Gaikwad and Udaji Pawar on the 19th March, 1727, to come with all their forces and join him at once. Further Kanhoji Bhonsla was called with his troops from Berar. In fact it took some time before Shahu could effectively return blows to the Nizam. But the arrival of Baji Rao in April 1727, after the Karnatic expedition, lightened the anxiety of Shahu, and he, now at one with the Peshwa, gave him entire management of the campaign against the Nizam. Now he fully realized the mistake of the Pratinidhi's policy towards the Nizam, and the significance of Baji Rao's resentment against it. He placed implicit confidence in him and Baji Rao amply justified the confidence. He rose equal to the occasion, and difficulties seemed to vanish at his touch.

Back at the capital, Baji Rao spent two months in discussing measures with Shahu. He himself was in a peculiarly difficult position at this time. All his effectives were engaged in the campaigns in Malwa, and it would be long he thought

[5] Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 183.

before they came and joined him. Therefore in consultation with Shahu he decided on a guerilla warfare against the Nizam. The latter in the meantime had gained no inconsiderable advantage over his adversary. He had occupied the whole country up to the banks of the Bhima. Evidently there was no time to be lost in deliberation only, and Baji Rao actually started his campaign in the height of the rains. He left Satara on the 1st of July, at the head of a small army, and constantly harassing the Nizam in his rear, reached Poona in August. At Poona he held a review of his troops, and spent a whole month in equipping them. The grand festival of Dashera was celebrated on the 13th of September, 1727, amidst great rejoicings. Hearty embraces mingled with the glitter of gold. Women and children unlocked all their treasure of love and affection to their men-folk ; for the return of the deep-blue sky, the clear sunshine, the honeyed blossoming of the Malati, Shefali and Yuthika of the fair season of autumn, and the strings of fleecy clouds floating above the outlines of the Sahyadri, are peculiarly reminiscent of the sad reflection that their dearest people on earth, father, brother, husband or son, would leave their homes and remain away for eight months, and who knows whether to return or not.

Counter-offensive of Baji Rao and the Victory of Palkhed, February 1728

After the Dashera, Baji Rao marched due north from Poona and reached a place called Pantambe on the 17th of October. Thence he turned east, and entered the district of Aurangabad, which he plundered without mercy. His route from Aurangabad to Jalna, was marked by ceaseless ravages and unending clouds of smoke. Then crossing the Purna and the Painganga he appeared at Mahur where he gave out that he intended to advance on Burhanpur and burn it to ashes.[6] This resolution of Baji Rao frightened Nizam-ul-Mulk, and he started hot-foot with Iwaz Khan to save the city. To keep up appearances Baji Rao sent a detachment towards Burhanpur, and himself with the bulk of the army crossed the Narmada over to Gujrat. In Gujrat he sent a message to its Governor Sarbuland Khan,

[6] *Marathi Riyasat* by Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 190.

Nizam's avowed enemy to the purport that he had invaded the province at the instance of Nizam-ul-Mulk. When the latter came to Burhanpur he found that Baji Rao had outwitted him, and in deep resentment he marched on Poona which had been left defenceless. Determined to teach a lesson to Baji Rao, the Nizam crossed the Bhima and actually occupied Indapur. The dangerous proximity of the Nizam, brought the Maratha king Shahu to his wit's end, and in great trepidation he wrote to Devji Sombanshi, Sabaji Nimbalkar, and other Maratha leaders to check his further progress. In the meantime Baji Rao who had been apprized of the intentions of the Nizam wrote to Ranoji Sindhia posted at Patas, to hold out as long as possible, and himself hurried back from Gujrat to divert the attention of the Nizam from Poona. Crossing the Ghats in the mid-winter he appeared like a storm on the eastern bank of the Godavari and plundered the two parganahs of Vaijapur and Gandapur belonging to the Nizam. When this news reached the Nizam at Ahmadnagar, he gave up his march on Poona and proceeded rapidly to check the further depredations of Baji Rao. In his anxiety to bring the wily Peshwa to book he crossed the Godavari and approached him from an easterly direction. Baji Rao had already devastated vast areas, on the eastern bank of the river, and he now, no more afraid of meeting the Nizam in the open for the latter's troops had been sufficiently tired out, contrived to draw him into those desolated tracts. Retreating slowly before the Nizam, Baji Rao tempted him further away from the river into the hilly regions between Aurangabad and Paithan, and when the Nizam reached Palkhed, he suddenly turned round and surrounded him from all sides. The advantage of the situation was on the side of the Marathas and the Peshwa had scrupulously managed to destroy everything round about. As far as the eye could reach all was a huge waste without water, without human habitation. In the meanwhile Shahu had sent the Pratinidhi with a large army to reinforce Baji Rao, but all had been over before he arrived. The Nizam was in a terrible fix, he could neither proceed further nor recede back. To stay there was to court death, for even water was not available. At last the Nizam deputed Iwaz Khan to open overtures for peace. He came to the Maratha camp on the 25th February,

and Baji Rao demanded two prominent nobles as hostages. Then they were given way to proceed to Mungi-Shegaon, where they found water, and a treaty was concluded there on the 6th of March, 1728.[7] It was a glorious day for Baji Rao—this 6th of March, for he had brought the warrior of a hundred battles to his knees, without the help of any one.

Treaty of Mungi-Shegaon, 6th March, 1728

The terms of the treaty were as honourable as the victory was glorious. Baji Rao dictated his terms, and the Nizam accepted all but one. He had to agree to the payment of all the arrears of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi, and the reinstatement of Maratha tax-collectors in his dominions, and had to recognize Shahu as the sole king of Maharastra. He was further required to surrender Sambhaji, which—be it said to his credit—he firmly refused, and Baji Rao, himself an honourable man, did not press him further.[8] The importance of this treaty cannot be exaggerated. It disarmed Nizam-ul-Mulk, it humiliated the Pratinidhi and his party, and lastly endeared Baji Rao to Shahu to a degree never known before. But for Baji Rao Shahu would have been at the mercy of Nizam-ul-Mulk. He would have well despaired of his sovereignty, and Maharastra would have been thrown into the vortex of an interminable civil war. But apart from these political results, the campaign demonstrated the triumph of guerilla warfare. Like Shivaji, Baji Rao showed himself a past master of that art. Indeed the victory of Palkhed was no mean achievement of the young Peshwa.

Duel between Shahu and Sambhaji

The victory of Palkhed achieved a great deal for the Marathas; but it left one vital thing undecided. That was the submission of Sambhaji. He had taken a leading part in the designs of Nizam-ul-Mulk, and when the latter was humbled he escaped scot-free. Had he kept quiet after the discomfiture of his ally and taken a lesson from it, he would not have been molested. But that was not to be. His unremitting intrigues

[7] *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, pp. 79-80; Sardesai, Vol. I, pp. 195-6; *Rajwade*, Vol. II, pp. 55-6.

[8] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 56; Sardesai, Vol. I, pp. 196-197; *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 80.

with other Maratha leaders spoiled the peace of Shahu, a man whose one outstanding feature of character was love of peace, and he resolved to put an end to Sambhaji's intrigues by taking to task Sambhaji and his co-adjutors. He knew full well, as much as the Peshwa, that the Nizam would no more venture to espouse his cause. Therefore it was agreed on all hands that the time was most opportune to reduce Sambhaji. In this, even the Pratinidhi was at one with Baji Rao and Shahu ; for he was now feeling uneasy about his past conduct in the Nizam affair. He knew Baji Rao had out-stripped him in the eyes of Shahu and all Maharastra, and he wanted to retrieve his lost prestige in the ensuing contest with Sambhaji.

Left alone, after the battle of Palkhed, Sambhaji persisted in his policy of opposition to Shahu, and reiterated the demand of half the Swarajya from him, with the help of Udaji Chauhan and Bhagwant Rao Amatya. The latter was not very loyal to him, and his chief strength lay in the support and abilities of Udaji. Now Udaji Chauhan was the chief of Athni and rose to power in the sunshine of Ramchandra Amatya's favour. He was a freebooter in his pursuits and a freelance in his attitude. Soon after the treaty of Shegaon he submitted to Shahu, and remained under him till the beginning of 1729. All the while he was playing a double game. He knew that Sambhaji was in league with Trimbak Rao Dabhade of Gujrat and the Nizam to make good his claim to the sovereignty over half of Maharastra. And as soon as he found that Baji Rao and his brother Chimnaji Appa had left for Gujrat he showed his hand to Shahu. His first move was on the country round the Warna, which he plundered. From Shirole, which he made his headquarters, he carried fire and sword into the countryside. One of these days Shahu had gone into those parts for hunting, and when he came to know that Udaji was hard by carrying depredations into the country he called him to an interview, promising him safe return. He came and heard the remonstrances of the king against his conduct but said little in reply. He was left off in safety as promised, but Shahu had soon to experience an adequate return for proving too true to his words.[9] After a few days four assassins entered Shahu's tent. But so

9 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 81.

dignified was king's bearing and so indifferent was he to danger that they lost heart and instead of committing his murder confessed their guilt and begged for his mercy. The king graciously pardoned them,[10] but resolved to put an end to the audacity and inroads of the Chauhan. No sooner resolved than urgent letters were despatched to Sambhu Singh Jadhav, Dawalji Somabanshi, Sidoji Nimbalkar, Saikhoji Angre, Baji Rao and Pilaji Jadhav. Full preparation was made between October 1729 and February 1730, and when everything was ready the command was given to the Pratinidhi, who showed great enthusiasm for it. There was another man who evinced equally great enthusiasm. That was Sambhu Singh Jadhav, son of Dhanaji and brother of Chandrasen. He was for long with his brother, but falling out with him he had lately left his shelter and came to that of Shahu. He was eager to gain favour of Shahu. Thus when the campaign opened Shahu had the satisfaction of receiving devoted loyalty and warm support from all, and he himself accompanied the army as far as Umbraj. If the Pratinidhi had been given the sole command in the campaign, the Peshwa kept in constant touch of Shahu between August 1729 and August 1730, to take the lead in his council. Indeed with such co-operation on all hands, success was within the grasp of Shahu.

In the meanwhile, Sambhaji was also preparing vigorously for a final measure of strength. His Astapradhans and leaders of the army had been called with their quota, and the troops had been massed on the bank of the Warna. Vyankat Rao Ghorpade and Bhagwant Rao Amatya were among them, and Udaji Chauhan had entrenched at Shirole. The campaign opened with the attack of the Pratinidhi and Sambhu Singh Jadhav on the position of Udaji in January 1730. His fortified camp was subjected to a vigorous siege, and it was not raised until Sambhaji came to his help and relieved the pressure on him. But it was of no avail. The fight continued with unabated vigour and Sambhaji and Udaji fled away to the fort of Panhala leaving everything behind. Their flight was the signal for wholesale desertion, and as his army dispersed in all directions the Pratinidhi captured the treasure-chests of Sambhaji, his camp

[10] Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, p. 195; *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 82.

equippage and all his family besides many nobles of note. Among those captured were Tara Bai, Rajas Bai, Sambhaji's wife Jija Bai, Bhagwant Rao Amatya, and Vyankat Rao Joshi. They were all taken to Shahu, who with a touch of chivalry ordered the release of all the ladies and departure under proper escort. Tara Bai alone was unwilling to go back to the hated tutelage of her co-wife Rajas Bai. When told that she could go back if she liked she observed with a touch of sad resignation "wherever I go I shall have to live in confinement. Here or there is same to me. Let me live here,"[11] and she was allowed to live in an old palace in the Satara fort. If she had gone back to Kolhapur, a host of complications would not have arisen in the affairs of the Maratha state after the death of Shahu. The captive nobles were ransomed by Sambhaji, but Shahu proved unrelenting. He next ordered the Pratinidhi to take Vishalgarh, and it was occupied by October 1730. Now the pressure was unbearable to Sambhaji, and he prudently chose to throw himself at the mercy of his cousin Shahu.[12] Kind and forgiving as ever, Shahu pardoned his fallen cousin and promised a share in the kingdom. On his own initiative he had made similar attempts to make up matters between himself and Shivaji in 1708, and between himself and Sambhaji in 1726. Both the times he had failed to make any impression on his obstinate cousins. Now, when Sambhaji was on his knees, he did not go back on his former proposals. The Pratinidhi, Bhagwant Rao and Tara Bai volunteered their services to bring about a permanent understanding between the two cousins, and while the terms of treaty were taking shape on the basis of Shahu's proposals of 1708 and 1726, it was arranged that the two scions of the royal house of Shivaji should meet. Business was combined with pleasure, ceremony and formalities with good-will and friendship. A formal invitation was sent to Sambhaji to come and meet Shahu,—he being the elder, at Jakhinvadi. In January 1731, Shahu sent Shripat Rao Pratinidhi with several notable officers to Panhala to escort Sambhaji into his dominion. Early in February they met at Jakhinvadi, which had excelled in splendour even the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

11 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 83.
12 Sardesai, Vol. I, pp. 202—5.

The nobles of Maharastra were all encamped there, and there was further an assemblage of soldiers with their numerous camp followers on both sides. After the formal meeting with all the grand ceremonials of the east was over, the royal camps moved to Karhad on the bank of the Krishna. From Karhad the princes went to Umbraj, where Shahu gave a series of state banquets followed by a round of grand entertainments given by the nobles. In the meanwhile the Holi or Vernal festival had approached, and Shahu desired his cousin to spend a few more pleasant days with him in the capital. When the royal train reached Satara the Peshwa's mansion was placed at his disposal, and he spent not only the Holi, but remained there for two months. All the while their agents were busy in settling the terms of the treaty, and when the treaty of Warna was drawn up Shahu lavished princely gifts on his cousin and gave leave to depart. He himself accompanied Sambhaji for about eight miles " all of which were ablaze with jewels and silks of the nobles in the train of the two monarchs " and then ordered Fatteh Singh Bhonsla to escort him back to Panhala. Such was the meeting of the two princes of Maharastra. But amidst the glitter of gold, blaze of jewels, round of banquets and the effusion of friendship the relative position of the princes was not forgotten, and if Shahu erred on the side of generosity the terms of the treaty did not. They clearly indicated the subordinate position of Sambhaji and his dependence on Shahu. It was a treaty dictated by a superior to an inferior, concluded on the 13th of April, 1731. Shahu granted the following terms to Sambhaji.

Warna Treaty, 13th April, 1731

(i) The Warna Mahal, and all the districts known as Dotarfa (claimed by both King Shahu and Sambhaji) along with the forts and military outposts to the south of the confluence (of the Warna with the Krishna) are given to you.

(ii) We give you the fort of Kopal and you give us Ratnagiri in exchange.

(iii) The military station at Vadgaon should be destroyed.

(iv) We shall destroy your enemies and you ours. We shall both work together for the improvement of the kingdom.

(v) From the confluence of the Warna and the Krishna, to

that of the Krishna and the Tungabhadra, all the forts and military outposts to the south are yours.

(vi) From the Tungabhadra to Rameshwaram half of all the country is ours, and half is yours.

(vii) In the Konkan all the districts from Salsi to Panch Mahal is yours.

(viii) You must not employ our servants and we must not employ yours.

(ix) You must surrender to us Miraj the forts of the district of Bijapur, Athni and Tasgaon.[13]

The Warna treaty decided the differences between Satara and Kolhapur existing ever since 1708. Never after this treaty was there any question on any side about the sphere of authority of each. It subordinated Kolhapur to Satara in all but name, and though Sambhaji grumbled over the stringency of the terms all through his life, he could not get them modified. And further be it said to the credit of Sambhaji that he never courted the help of an extraneous power to press his point. The treaty effected a division of the kingdom, but nevertheless it marked a distinct advance in the authority of Shahu within his territories and guarded his position from intermittent exposures to the sidewinds of civil strife. In the eyes of his own people as much as in those of the aliens he appeared to be the real "Chhatrapati" now. He became the suzerain lord of the country. Lastly it smoothed the course of the Peshwa and gave him the requisite respite at home to successfully carry out his policy abroad.

Sambhaji's Later Years

As has been indicated above the division of the country did not impair the suzerainty of Shahu. It all the more confirmed the dependence of Sambhaji on him, and he gave ample proof of this during his lifetime. He lived for about thirty years more after the Warna treaty and survived Shahu for about eleven years. As long as Shahu lived he used to visit Satara often either to pay his respects to him, or to spend a festive occasion with him or to get some little point about the state

13 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, pp. 62-63.

cleared or done in his favour. In short he gave proof of uniform loyalty to Shahu throughout his life. In 1732 he came to Satara and would address Fatteh Singh Bhonsla as "Dada" a respectable term for brother. When in 1734-35 he visited Jejuri with his wife Jija Bai, he made a detour through Pratapgad and Mahabaleswar, and came to Satara. There he enjoyed the hospitality of the king for two months and when he left for Kolhapur Shahu gave him a warm send-off and accompanied him to a respectable distance. He came again in 1741, 1744 and 1746 mostly on some state necessity, and each time he struck some bargain in his favour. Eleven years after the death of Shahu, he died on the 20th December, 1760.[14] In the course of the narrative we shall have occasion to make passing references to his activities.

Duel between the Peshwa and the Senapati

When the grandeur of royal meetings at Jakhinvadi, Karhad, and Satara dazzled the eyes of the people, when mirth and pleasure flowed on the cloths of gold and orient pearls, when the treaty of Warna was taking shape, there were happening other incidents in Gujrat, that opened in letters of blood, a new epoch in the history of the Peshwas. Baji Rao had been pitted against the Commander-in-Chief Trimbak Rao Dabhade, and there was a sanguinary duel between the two for the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of Gujrat. Only twelve days before the conclusion of the Warna treaty was fought the battle of Dabhai, that ended in the defeat and death of Baji Rao's hated rival Trimbak Rao Senapati. The victory of Dabhai marked a great advance in the power of Baji Rao, and practically united two important offices in the same person. Thenceforth the Peshwa became the Senapati also to all practical purposes. But Dabhai did more than this. It achieved the triumph of Baji Rao's policy and helped the building-up of the Maratha Confederacy as begun by Balaji Vishwanath. Important as were the consequences of this duel (between Baji Rao and Trimbak Rao), it is no less so, to understand how the duel came about. In the tangled skein of the story it should not be lost sight of that the contest was mainly a matter of principle, and that Baji Rao

14 *Marathi Riyasat* by Sardesai, Vol. I, pp. 214-15.

was fighting not for his own interests, but for a point of policy. On the contrary Trimbak Rao was fighting for his own ends, and that at the instigation of the sworn enemy of the Marathas, Nizam-ul-Mulk. The sanguinary character of the struggle was due to the bitterness of Trimbak Rao, and such was his obstinacy that the words of Shahu failed to produce any effect on him.

Trimbak Rao was the eldest of the three sons of Khanderao Dabhade. The ancestors of the Dabhades were Patils of the village Talegaon, and they had continuously served the Maratha kings generation after generation since the time of Shivaji. During the troubled days of Rajaram, they rendered meritorious services at the risk of their life and consequently on the death of his father and brother, Khanderao was given the title of Sena-Khas-Khel by Rajaram. Khanderao served Tara Bai for some time, and when she was defeated by Shahu he took service with the new king. Khanderao was a great friend of Balaji Vishwanath and both acted in concert with each other for the welfare of the Maratha state. In 1717 Shahu invested him with the office of Senapati, and he accompanied the Peshwa to Delhi. On his return from Delhi, he was posted to the northern frontier of Maharastra in order to keep an eye on Khandesh, Berar and Gujrat. He was present in the battle of Balapur and later subdued Khandesh, Baglan, and the whole country from Bassim to Surat for the Marathas. During his old age his son Trimbak Rao and his agent Pilaji Gaikwad discharged his duties, and on his death in May 1729, Trimbak Rao succeeded to the office and possessions of his father (8th January, 1730).[15]

There was little agreement between old Dabhade and young Baji Rao in matters of state. The former resented his lead and disapproved of his policy. He was one of the party opposed to the Peshwa at the court. This difference was aggravated to the point of bitterness towards the end of his days and after his death. It was brought about by two causes: first, the interference of Baji Rao in the affairs of Gujrat, which Dabhades thought was a preserve of their own, second, the intrigues of Nizam-ul-Mulk with Dabhade, whom he had incited against Baji Rao on the score of his own interests.

15 *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. I, pp. 217—28.

We have already noticed that Kanthaji and Pilaji were residing in Gujrat as the agent of Shahu and the Senapati respectively for the collection of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from that province. In 1726 Sarbuland Khan granted the rights of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi over the country north of the Mahi to Kanthaji, over the country south of the Mahi to Pilaji. By a previous arrangement of Shahu the blackmail of Gujrat had been assigned to the Senapati, and that of Malwa to the Peshwa. Baji Rao did not approve of this entirely separate allotment of the provinces, for that would make chieftains independent of one another, and would destroy the root of the Maratha Confederacy, which lay in the interdependence of all. On that account he was opposed to the manner of the distribution of provinces to some of the leading Maratha chiefs, e.g., Raghoji Bhonsla, Fatteh Singh Bhonsla, Angre and Dabhade, and he was involved in frequent broils with them. But not one of them realized his point, and all of them swore hostility against him. In pursuance of this policy Baji Rao approached the Senapati with the proposals that he should give the Peshwa half of his revenues of Gujrat, and the Peshwa would give him half of his yield of Malwa. This the Senapati rejected with scorn, and Baji Rao, domineering as he was, proceeded to enforce the measure on him. He ordered his agent at Dhar, Udaji Powar to enter Gujrat, and levy contribution on the portion assigned to Pilaji. Udaji acted as he was bid, and then resulted a fight in which the Deputy Faujdar of Dabhai Abdun-nabi Khan took the side of Udaji. In the subsequent fighting Abdun-nabi Khan was killed, and the town and fort thus fell into Udaji's sole possession. This only served to unite the two Maratha sardars—Kanthaji and Pilaji—who considered as established in Gujrat, against Udaji, and they came with a strong army and laid siege to Dabhai. Udaji sought the help of Sarbuland Khan, but failed. The confederates had arranged an agreement with him, and therefore he (Sarbuland Khan) was in no mood to assist Udaji. Perforce he had to give up his position and return to Dhar in Malwa early in 1727. Dabhai and Baroda were occupied by Pilaji.[16]

[16] *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 390.

The retreat of Udaji to Malwa almost synchronises with the return of Baji Rao from his second expedition into the Karnatic, and the outbreak of hostilities between Nizam-ul-Mulk and Shahu. We have already noticed how Baji Rao spent two months in Satara discussing the plan of his campaign and left for Poona in July. The campaign was actually set on foot in September 1727. Now was the advantage for the Senapati, who had been sufficiently offended by the Peshwa for his interferences in Gujrat through Udaji Pawar. Udaji had been chased out, and Nizam-ul-Mulk and Sambhaji were taking good account of Baji Rao. This was the time selected by Trimbak Rao, to feed fat his ancient grudge,[17] and he invaded Malwa to create a diversion in favour of Nizam-ul-Mulk. But Baji Rao was not to be outwitted. He had written to Sarbuland Khan, for the cession of the Chauth and had sent his able brother Chimnaji, at the head of an army to invade Gujrat at the end of the rainy season of 1727. But Sarbuland Khan demanded extravagant conditions in return for the Chauth and the negotiations fell through. Then Chimnaji began to plunder Duraha, an unwalled town, realized a ransom and retired to Malwa by way of Godhara and Dohad, which he occupied along with the fort of Champaner. But Sarbuland Khan was not left in peace. Soon appeared Baji Rao like a whirlwind in Gujrat after throwing Nizam-ul-Mulk off the scent in January 1728. He told Sarbuland that he had invaded his country in consultation with the Nizam. He spent a month rapidly moving from place to place and plundering the people of the town and country, and appeared once again on the banks of the Godavari to bring the Nizam to his knees at Palkhed. When the treaty of Mungi-Shegaon was taking shape, Baji Rao reiterated his demand of the Chauth to Sarbuland Khan. The Peshwa promised to keep peace in return. But the governor at first treated this with scant attention, for he had in the meanwhile chased Kanthaji and Pilaji out of his province, and was expecting the arrival of the Emperor at the head of a strong army from Delhi. Baji Rao however was not to be trifled with, and when he learnt that the Emperor was in no way disposed to come to the help of the Subahdar in person he sent his brother

17 Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 225.

Chimnaji at the head of a strong army in 1729. Chimnaji displayed great vigour in the campaign, and carrying fire and sword through the beautiful countryside and levying contribution on the flourishing marts of Gujrat, he halted at the town of Dholka, and sent in demands for the Chauth to Sarbuland Khan.[18] The latter was now in no position to reject the proposal. Rumours of his transfer had reached him from Delhi and he willingly bought the Marathas off on their own terms. Like Sayyid Husain Ali on a previous occasion he might have thought that an amicable settlement with the Marathas, might bring fresh accession of strength to him, that might stand him in good stead in his resistance to the governor-designate Abhai Singh, Maharaja of Jodhpur. With these motives he ceded the "Sardeshmukhi of the whole revenue, both on the land and customs with the exception of the fort of Surat, and five per cent on the revenues of the city of Ahmadabad."[19] In return for the Sardeshmukhi the Peshwa promised to protect the country from all the enemies of peace and order, and for the Chauth agreed to maintain a force of 2,500 horse at the disposal of the viceroy.[20] He further agreed to prevent other Maratha leaders from leaguing with the disaffected zamindars and Koli chiefs of the country and thus disturb public peace. "After these deeds were obtained the Mokassa, and the collection of a part of the Sardeshmukhi, were assigned to Dhabaray; but jealousy of Baji Rao's interference in the affairs of the province, occasioned an implacable enmity on the part of that chief."[21] By this time Khanderao was dead, and Trimbak Rao, the avowed enemy of Baji Rao, had succeeded to his father's office and possessions. Now the breach between the two had become wider than ever.

Nizam's Intrigues

The breach between Trimbak Rao and Baji Rao gave an impetus to the intriguing nature of the Nizam. He knew that Trimbak Rao alone, would not dare defy Baji Rao, but with

18 *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 393.
19 Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 504.
20 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 59.
21 Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 505.

the slightest support from him he would jump on a war.[22] Further the time was most favourable to fan a civil war between the Peshwa and the Senapati, for Shahu and Sambhaji were pitted against each other, and a large part of the army was locked up in the south. Burning for revenge Trimbak Rao had secured the support of Kanthaji, who was now working against Baji Rao. Thus the Nizam found Trimbak Rao, his agent Pilaji Gaikwad and his ally Kanthaji, ready instruments to his hand, and he set to work mischief to the national cause of the Marathas as championed by Baji Rao. Ever since Palkhed he had been covertly countenancing all the intrigues against the domination of the Peshwa. His hand was working in the aggressive designs of Udaji Chauhan, that ultimately resulted in the war between Shahu and Sambhaji. Simultaneously he created another trouble for Baji Rao in the north. In November 1730 at his instigation Dabhade entered Malwa with his confederates Pilaji and Kanthaji, and looted it. Shahu apprized of this ordered them to desist from further depredations but it was of no avail. Next Dabhade made an alliance with Udaji Pawar, who had quarrelled with Baji Rao as far back as November 1729.[23] It was further arranged that they should unite with the Nizam, and all of them proceed to the destruction of Baji Rao.

When the dark designs were thus being formed against Baji Rao, his attention was distracted by the troubles created by Sambhaji. He arranged the expedition against Sambhaji and had to remain by the side of Shahu till August 1730. All the while he was keeping a close watch on the movements of the Nizam. On 8th July, 1730, arrived his brother Chimnaji after concluding the agreement with Sarbuland Khan about the Chauth of Gujrat. Throughout the rainy season (July to September) he was preparing not only for the campaign against Sambhaji but against the Nizam and Dabhade. When he found that the expedition against Sambhaji had been fully equipped, he left for Poona, and was detained there till the Dashera on account of certain family affairs. Rakhma Bai, the wife of Chimnaji, after giving birth to the boy later known as Sadasheo

22 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 61.

23 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, pp. 66-67; Sardesai, Vol. I. p. 225.

Rao, on 2nd August, died of puerperal fever before the month was past. The bereavement unnerved Chimnaji, and the brothers had to pass a month in sorrow, before they could set out from Poona.[24] At last the Dashera festival came off on the 10th October and the Peshwa made a move out of the city that very day. As he embarked on the expedition and proceeded by gradual stages towards Gujrat, staggering news reached him from all sides ; that Kanthaji, Pilaji, Udaji, and Dabhade had formed a league against him, that Chimnaji Damodar had joined them and that Nizam-ul-Mulk was also coming to their aid in combination with Mahammad Khan Bangash of Malwa.[25] But undaunted by these heavy tidings, Baji Rao took the road towards Khandesh by way of Nasik and reached Surat by the beginning of December 1730. From Surat he passed on to Bharoch and thence towards Baroda with the intention of driving out Pilaji from there. At this juncture Abhai Singh, who had in October 1730 assumed charge of the government of Gujrat and since then had been exerting to rid his province of the depredations of Pilaji, sent an invitation to Baji Rao, for an interview at Ahmadabad.[26] Divining the motives of the Maharaja, he gladly accepted the invitation, and met him at Ahmadabad in February 1731. In a grand audience held in the Shahi Bag, on the banks of the Sabarmati, it was decided that the engagement of Sarbuland Khan would be respected by Abhai Singh, and consequently the Peshwa must fulfil his part of the engagement. Accordingly Baji Rao started with a contingent of the Maharaja towards Baroda, the seat of Pilaji's power, to besiege and reduce it. As he approached Sawali by 25th March, 1731, he got definite information about the movements of the armies of Dabhade and the Nizam. He was told that Dabhade with his confederates Pilaji, Kanthaji, and Udaji Pawar was fast proceeding to join the Nizam. The danger of such a junction for Baji Rao was too obvious to be speculated upon, and on the spur of the moment he decided to fall on Dabhade and destroy him before he got the help of the Nizam. With a lightning march he turned east, and arrested the further progress of the Senapati at Dabhai. With

24 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, pp. 60-61.
25 Irvine, Vol. II, p. 250.
26 *Surat Factory Diary*, Vol. 614, *Letter No. 39*, dated 21st September, 1730 (Unpublished).

an army of fifteen to sixteen thousand horse, he fought Dabhade's which is said to have been upwards of fifty thousand on the 1st of April, 1731, on the plains of Bhilapur near Dabhai between Baroda and that town, defeated and killed him in the battle.[27] The Dabhade faction was thus wiped off in blood but it is said Baji Rao was forced to take this extreme measure on account of the obduracy of Dabhade. He never showed himself amenable to reason. Baji Rao tried an amicable settlement and "commenced negotiating from the day of his quitting Poona, and continued it until the hour of attack! His death left complete victory to Baji Rao with all but nominal control of the Maratha sovereignty."[28]

Consequences of Dabhai

After the battle Baji Rao sent an account of it to Shahu, and when Shahu learnt of the death of Dabhade he was smitten with remorse. He sent for Baji Rao and Chimnaji Appa and "for Trimbak Rao's brothers Yashwant Rao and Sawai Babu Rao, and for Khanderao Dabhade's widow Uma Bai, and did all that he could to effect a reconciliation. He next set himself to the practical side of the question. He defined the boundaries of Malwa and Gujrat and passed orders that half the revenues of each province should be paid direct to the royal treasury by the Peshwa. The other half of the Gujrat revenues should be allotted to the Dabhades for the upkeep of the army occupation. The other half of the Malwa revenues should similarly be allotted to Baji Rao for his military expenses. He further gave the office of Senapati to Yashwant Rao, and that of Sena-khas-khel to Sawai Babu Rao. But in spite of the royal generosity, the house of Dabhades never recovered from the ruinous defeat of Dabhai."[29] Yashwant Rao who succeeded to the office of Commander-in-Chief was a worthless idler, and fell into evil ways and a victim to opium and drink. The power ultimately passed from their hands into those of the descendants of Pilaji Gaikwad. But that was not all. Dabhai was a victory without parallel in the history of the Peshwas. It marks a new phase

27 *Surat Factory Diary*, Vol. 614, *Letter No. 67*, dated 7th April, 1731; *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 61; *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 68.

28 Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 508.

29 Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, p. 194.

in their rise ; it left Baji Rao " with all but nominal control of the Maratha Sovereignty." Indeed Dabhai was a double triumph for Baji Rao—it was a triumph for his policy ; it was a triumph for his ascendancy. It has been indicated above that with Baji Rao the struggle was a matter of principle, of policy and not of self-interest. He was fighting to maintain an equilibrium in the Maratha confederacy by enforcing interdependence of its various members in matters of money and jagirs. For this he had to bear in his lifetime a great deal of unmerited odium. This was the first instance, and here he won a complete victory, for his arrangement was ultimately adopted. Within the four years from April 1727 to April 1731, he had encountered a series of difficulties, and with admirable fortitude and consummate ability he had combated them all, conquered them all. If Palkhed humiliated Nizam-ul-Mulk the enemy of the Maratha state, if Warna definitely subjected Sambhaji to Shahu, Dabhai crowned these by sweeping away all possibilities of mischief on the part of both Nizam-ul-Mulk and Sambhaji. After the destruction of Dabhade, Sambhaji the Nizam and other miscreants fully awoke to the transcendent abilities of Baji Rao and dared not defy him. By sheer force of the unrelenting law of the survival of the fittest, Baji Rao towered supreme over all. And in fact Dabhai was no mean achievement. When two armies were closing round him, with all the determination of malice and vindictiveness, it required great coolness and caution to face them despite overwhelming odds. Baji Rao had only 15,000 men when he encountered Dabhade at the head of 50,000. The issues of the battle were obstinately contested till the last moment, and during the whole course of it Baji Rao displayed excellent generalship. Though Shahu made Baji Rao fall at the feet of Uma Bai, his admiration for his young Peshwa now rose higher than ever, and henceforth his confidence in him was unshakable. Baji Rao eclipsed all his rivals in the court in point favour in his master's eyes. Indeed none ventured to dispute his authority now, neither his master, nor the nobles. Baji Rao alone held the helm of the Maratha state, and steered it through many a shoal and rock to the ultimate goal, defined in his policy—the Maratha Empire. Nine more years of unflagging zeal and indefatigable activities, brought the Marathas

actually to strike at the trunk which he had showed them in 1722. So it is that Dabhai forms a landmark in the history of the Peshwas.

Baji Rao and the Nizam Again

After Dabhai came the turn of Nizam-ul-Mulk that arch-enemy of the Maratha state. Baji Rao was burning in resentment against him, for it was through his agency that the troubles of the last four years had arisen. Now with grim determination he started to destroy his last fangs. He prepared a large army to meet him in the open field. But if Baji Rao was so resolute to wreak his vengeance, the Nizam was not less so to effect a conciliation on terms, which would be most suitable to Baji Rao. The destruction of Dabhade knocked the bottom out of the Nizam's intrigues, and there was an end to the proposed alliance of the Nizam and Bangash. Then the Nizam thought that to buy off Baji Rao on his own terms would be most advisable under the circumstances, and he knew that nothing was more after the heart of Baji Rao than to allow him a free scope in the North. Since the loss of Malwa and Gujrat he was in no mood to extend his power to the north of the Narmada. The Karnatic was his proper field he thought, and he knew that in his infatuation for the North Baji Rao would never care for the Karnatic. Hence he seized the earliest opportunity after Dabhai of sending envoys to Baji Rao, with offers of peace. He promised to give him free passage through his dominions into Malwa and urged him to conquer the rich imperial dominions rather than waste his energies in the barren soil of the Deccan. He should fight the Emperor rather than a Viceroy like himself. This proposal was eminently pleasing to the Peshwa. " In August 1731 Baji Rao and Nizam-ul-Mulk agreed to give each other a free hand—the Nizam should be at liberty to gratify his ambitions in the South, the Peshwa in the North."[30] Now Baji Rao was left to pursue his policy of Maratha expansion unhampered by the rivalry of the Nizam. And the Nizam eager to keep himself behind the barrier of the Marathas, so that he might be free

30 Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, p. 212.

from the jealousies and intrigues of Delhi, had his purpose served.[31] But it bore bitter fruits for the Mughal Empire. The Marathas were set on the track to Delhi through the selfish ambition of the Nizam, and as we shall see in the next chapter, soon mastered the North through the connivance of the Rajputs.

[31] Malcolm, *Central India*, Vol. I, p. 79.

CHAPTER VI

GUJRAT, MALWA AND BUNDELKHAND (1731—1738)

BAJI RAO'S POLICY OF MARATHA EXPANSION—CHAUTH AND SARDESHMUKHI THE FORERUNNERS OF MARATHA SOVEREIGNTY

THE four years from 1727 to 1731 were a period of preparation for the expansion of the Marathas beyond the Narmada. At the outset this expansion did not mean anything more than the imposition of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi on the provinces beyond that river. Inspired by an imperialistic policy Baji Rao first of all wanted to throw out zones of protectorate as widely around the Swarajya as possible. Vast dominions were therefore taken under protection, and the price of protection was the payment of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi. Thus the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi, were the forerunners of the Maratha sovereignty. It is very similar to the British method of trade preceding the flag. Both are equally effective to serve the desired end, and in a sense the Maratha method was more vigorous. But the Marathas failed because they did not realize that the first requisite of building up an empire was harmonious and effective co-operation. The Maratha confederacy was the inevitable result of throwing up zones of protectorate, behind which Maratha imperialism would march. As different provinces were brought under the Marathas capable leaders were required to realize the revenues and guarantee peace to the people. Nothing better could be conceived of as a principle, but in practice it was an utter failure ; not because the principle was faulty, but because the inherent nature of the Maratha, of the Hindu was at fault. Maratha confederacy made all co-operation impossible. Baji Rao's lifelong exertions were devoted to the two ends of securing the Maratha expansion in the North, and of ensuring harmonious operation of the confederacy by enforcing interdependence on its various members. In the first he succeeded, in the second he failed. After a strenuous struggle for four years from 1727 to 1731 he prepared the ground for the unhampered progress

of the Marathas into Gujrat, Malwa and Bundelkhand. Indeed it took him the rest of his life. But all along he had been combating the individualistic tendency, the separatist ideal of the members of the Maratha confederacy. He incurred great odium on that account, and yet his efforts were all in vain. Reserving the narrative of this phase of his activity to a later chapter, we will pass on to survey the working of his policy of Maratha expansion beyond the Narmada, which continued for seven years from 1731 to 1738.

Gujrat Affair and Murder of Pilaji by Abhai Singh at Dakore, 1732

After the battle of Dabhai it had been decided by Shahu that out of Gujrat revenues one-half should be paid to the royal treasury, and the rest should be utilized by the Senapati, Yashwant Rao for the upkeep of his office. Yashwant Rao being a man of worthless character and indolent habits left the entire management of his affairs to Pilaji Gaikwad. Pilaji was a capable man and though defeated at Dabhai, wielded great influence with the hillmen of Gujrat and the Koli chiefs. He retained possession of Baroda, and realized the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi for the Senapati. This the Governor, Maharaja Abhai Singh did not like, and noticing that the power of the Senapati had suffered at the battle of Dabhai, and that the Peshwa was busy in Malwa, he now determined to drive out Pilaji. One of his Rajput Sardars wrested Baroda from Pilaji and then Abhai Singh laid siege to Dabhai. In the meantime Pilaji neutralized the success of the governor by winning several battles against his Rajputs with the help of the hillmen, with whom Pilaji was very popular. Knowing full well that Pilaji's guerilla warfare would never come to an end, and that he would never be able to pacify Gujrat so long as Pilaji lived Maharaja Abhai Singh determined to put an end to his life, which he thought would bring peace to the country.[1] It was a dastardly act that he attempted, so incompatible with Rajput character. Luring him to proposals of peace he sent some emissaries to discuss the preliminaries. These emissaries had frequent interviews with him and at last one evening, on the

[1] *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 394.

pretence of whispering something to his ear one of them approached and stabbed him to death.[2] This murder was committed in 1732 at Dakore, a place sacred to all Maharastra, and hallowed by the association of Ramdas. Popular legends fondly relate how the devotion of that great saint attracted Krishna from Dwaraka to Dakore, where at present stands a shrine holier than that of Dwaraka. The murder at such a holy spot aroused universal indignation and Abhai Singh was soon to realize that he had committed not only a crime but a blunder. The murder was an outcome of the jealousy to which all Jodhpur rulers were susceptible, for they could never tolerate the least interference in the affairs of Gujrat. The Maharaja however was yet to realize that it would make Gujrat too hot for him, and would expose his kingdom to the Marathas. Soon enough it provoked a rising of the hilly tribes of Gujrat—the Kolis. The valiant lady Uma Bai, mother of the late Trimbak Rao enraged at the outrageous act gave unstinted support to Pilaji's son Damaji and his brother Mahadaji to wreak vengeance on the Rajputs (1733).[3] They marched at the head of a strong army, recovered Dabhai and Baroda, attacked Ahmadabad, and carried fire and sword into the lands eastward of that city as far as the frontier of Jodhpur. Maharaja Abhai Singh now realized the full magnitude of his unwise act, and when he found that his own kingdom might fall a prey to the Maratha raids he left Damaji in possession of the towns he had recovered, promised to pay the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi besides 80 thousand rupees out of the revenue of Ahmadabad, and retired to Jodhpur leaving Gujrat in charge of Ratan Singh Bhandari.[4] After his departure the affairs of Gujrat sunk into greater confusion of which the Marathas took full advantage, and the province was practically lost to the Mughal empire after 1735.[5]

MALWA: JOINT ACTION OF THE RAJPUTS AND THE MARATHAS

Equally unfortunate was the province of Malwa. It has been already indicated that it had attracted the attention of

2 Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 514.

3 *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 394.

4 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 64; *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 316.

5 Iradat Khan, *Scott*, Vol. II, pp. 190-91; and *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 394-95.

the Marathas ever since the time of Rajaram. A Marathi letter of 1715 ascribes the first attempts at the conquest of Malwa to Dawalji Sombanshi.[6] During the regime of Balaji Vishwanath it was subjected to the intermittent raids of the Marathas. In pursuance of his policy of Maratha expansion to the North by systematic aggression, Baji Rao invaded the province twice between 1722 and 1724, and left his agents Udaji Pawar, Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Sindhia. The Marathas were substantially helped by Nandlal Mandloi Chaudhury of Indore, who acting in concert with Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur entered into a correspondence with the Peshwa and allowed Malhar Rao Holkar to have his headquarters at Indore, and Udaji Pawar to conquer the town and province of Dhar between 1723 and 1724. The Chaudhury held the key to Malwa for he was in charge of the fords of Tanda, Bhairon, Nalchha, and many others on the Narmada. With his assistance the stream of Maratha invasion flowed into Malwa and it was a part of the scheme of Hindu revival formed by Sawai Jai Singh. By tradition he was favourably disposed towards the Marathas. His grandfather Mirza Raja Jai Singh who had been sent against Shivaji by Aurangzeb, was not free from some leanings towards them. After the disastrous failure of Aurangzeb Sawai Jai Singh entertained hopes of reviving Hindu glory by joint efforts of the Rajputs and the Marathas. When Bahadur Shah proceeded to the Deccan to put an end to the troubles raised by Kambaksh he took with him Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur and Maharaja Ajit Singh of Jodhpur. But as the imperial camp crossed the Narmada the two Rajput princes returned home, and in consultation with Maharana Amar Singh of Udaipur made a solemn pact that they would not give their daughters to the Mughal princes, nor serve the Mughal Emperor. To make this agreement a success, they had thought of taking the help of the Marathas if necessary, and fight out their cause with the Emperor. Bahadur Shah could not take effective steps against these princes on account of his other preoccupations, and it was left to the Sayyids to humiliate the confederate princes. Sayyid Husain led an expedition into Rajputana between November 1713 and July 1714, in the course of which he singled out Ajit

6 Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 317.

Singh, defeated him, and forced him to give his daughter to Farrukhsiyar. Jai Singh was not a friend of the Sayyids, and after their fall, he once again rose to power. Ajit Singh, who had taken back his daughter after the murder of Farrukhsiyar did not find favour with Mahammad Shah, and as it has been stated in a previous chapter, his governorships of Ajmer and Ahmadabad were taken away from him. In June 1724 he was murdered by his younger son Bhakt Singh, and Abhai Singh came to the throne of Jodhpur, which was now sinking into insignificance. That was due to the character of Ajit Singh who was " exceedingly wanting in good faith, a breaker of his oath, one who had slain unfairly many of his relations and dependents."[7] In 1730 Abhai Singh was appointed to the government of Gujrat, and on account of his treacherous act, which was in keeping with the tradition of the family since the time of Jaswant Singh, he was compelled to leave the province and return to Jodhpur to sink into well-merited obscurity. But Jai Singh's influence was in the ascendant in the Mughal court.[8] Between 1710 and 1711 he is said to have been the Nazim or Governor of Malwa and probably for some years afterwards. In 1719 he had been propitiated by a handsome payment of money and grant of the Sarkar of Surat. As Governor of Agra in 1722 he had been entrusted with the reduction of the Jats, and had secured the government of Malwa for Raja Girdhar Bahadur on the 9th September, 1722. A year after Raja Girdhar was removed in favour of Nizam-ul Mulk's cousin Azimullah Khan, and when Nizam-ul-Mulk fled to the Deccan, was reinstated in the government of that province on 12th June, 1725. It was chiefly through the influence of Jai Singh that Raja Girdhar had been twice appointed to that province, and Jai Singh wanted him to act in concert with the Marathas. During the decadent days of the Mughal Empire Jai Singh strongly desired Hindu dominance, and favoured the rise of the Marathas. Actuated by this motive he repeatedly advised Raja Girdhar to be friendly to the Marathas, but he had " aimed at turning Malwa into a hereditary kingdom for his family, in imitation of Nizam-ul-Mulk and other ambitious

[7] Irvine, Vol. II, p. 117.
[8] *Central India* by Malcolm, Vol. I, p. 65.

provincial governors . . . and Daya Bahadur (his successor) dreamt the same dream. They could hold Malwa only by promising to the Emperor to keep the Marathas out. In this work they could not get any Rajput support. The Rajputs, espècially Sawai Jai Singh, were allies of the Marathas and actually called them into Malwa in order to weaken the detested Mughal power in Northern India. This is the keynote of Malwa history in the early eighteenth century."[9] Nandlal Mandloi Chaudhury who guarded all the fords of the Narmada and " held the hearts of all the chiefs of Malwa in the clutches of his hand " acted as an intermediary between the Marathas and the Rajputs, and aiding every movement against the Mughal government in Malwa facilitated the task of Baji Rao. Nor was he alone to assist the Marathas. Thakur Anup Singh of Badhwani also favoured the advent of the Marathas into Malwa, and actually had an interview with Baji Rao in January 1723.

Baji Rao's Attack on Malwa

Raja Girdhar Nagar was appointed to Malwa for the first time on the 9th September, 1722, and continued up to the 25th May, 1723. Baji Rao's first incursion into Malwa took place during this incumbency of the Raja. He was reinstated to the office on the 12th June, 1725. During this interval Azimullah Khan, Nizam-ul-Mulk's cousin, was the governor. It has been already indicated that Nizam-ul-Mulk, resigned the office of Wazir and retired to the Deccan in February 1724, partly on account of the imbecility of the Emperor, and partly on account of the invasions of the Marathas. When he arrived at Burhanpur (May—June 1724) he opened overtures with Shahu in order to quell the intrigues of the Emperor with Mubariz Khan.[10] In the battle of Shakhar Kheda, October 1724, Baji Rao was said to have been present. Therefore Baji Rao must have led his second expedition into Malwa before the monsoon months of 1724 (July—September), and since the Nizam arrived at Burhanpur by May—June, before May. Thus it is sure that the second expedition of Baji Rao must have been undertaken between October 1723 and April 1724. At the

[9] *Later Mughals* by Irvine, Vol. II, p. 244.
[10] *Later Mughals* by Irvine, Vol. II, p. 146.

end of this expedition he left three of his agents in Malwa who became founders of three great houses of Central India—Holkars of Indore, Sindhias of Gwalior and Pawars of Dhar.[11]

11 " Malhar Rao Holkar was of lowly origin. His ancestors were Dhangars or herdsmen by caste and first lived in the village of Waphgaon. Afterwards they moved to Hol on the banks of the Nira, forty miles from Poona and within the limits of the Phaltan state. Their original name was Virkar, but this they changed to Holkar as a result of their new residence. Malhar Rao's father was one Khandoji Holkar who held in Hol the office of Chaugula or Chaudhuri, a superior village servant. He became the father of a baby boy, to whom he gave the name of Malhari. When the boy was only three years old, Khandoji Holkar died. To save her baby from the malice of his father's brothers, his mother Jiwai took him with her to her own village Talode in Khandesh. There Malhari or Malhar Rao as he now came to be called, was brought up by his mother's brother Bhoj Raj, who was in command of a troop of irregular horse under Kanthaji Kadam Bande. One day when still a child he went to sleep in the shade of a tree. As he slept so the story runs, the sun moved and its rays fell upon the unconscious boy. When his mother came to fetch him home, she saw a large cobra, protecting his face with its hood expanded. She called her brother to witness this strange spectacle and both agreed that it foretold the boy's future greatness. Not long afterwards Bhoj Raj had a vision of the goddess Lakshmi, who told him that his nephew was destined to be a king. Convinced by these two events that Malhar Rao was reserved for something better than a herdsman's life, Bhoj Raj enlisted him as a trooper and gave him in marriage his own daughter Gautamabai. Malhar Rao's courage soon brought him rewards, but he once nearly ended his career by striking in the face of Balaji Vishwanath's son Baji Rao with a clod of earth, because the latter objected to his cutting the peasants' corn to feed his horses. Baji Rao was generous enough to ask his father to spare the rough soldier. This generosity Holkar did not forget. After the battle of Balapur (1720) in which he greatly distinguished himself, he smoothed over a quarrel between Kanthaji Kadam Bande and Baji Rao. This pleased the young Peshwa so much that in 1725 he gave Holkar a command of 500 horse in his own service and became greatly attached to him.

Ranoji Sindhia came of an ancient Kshatriya family of which the original name was Sendrak. They rose to the royal notice in the time of the Bahmani kings and their name was corrupted into Shinde, a word which the English have further corrupted into Sindhia. They became Patils or herdsmen of the village of Kanber Khed, about twelve miles from Satara. In Aurangzeb's time they held commands in his army and the Emperor married to Shahu while in captivity, Savitri Bai, the daughter of a Sindhia in his service. On Aurangzeb's death, Savitri Bai's father fell fighting for Azam Shah. Ranoji Sindhia was a scion of a younger branch. His father was in Balaji Vishwanath's service and he himself was brought up as a playmate of Baji Rao. When Baji Rao grew up, he made Ranoji his orderly, and it was Ranoji's duty to carry his master's slippers. One day Baji Rao found his orderly asleep, but in his slumber Ranoji still held fast the Peshwa's slippers. Baji Rao promoted him, believing that one who was so faithful in small things would prove no less faithful in great ones.

The family of Pawar claimed descent from the Pramar Rajputs, whose house, according to the legends of Malwa, ruled over that country for a thousand and fifty-eight years. Krishnaji Pawar distinguished himself under Shivaji and his son Babaji won the title of Vishwas Rao from Rajaram at Jinji. He had two grandsons Sambhaji and Kabaji who both served in the royal armies. Sambhaji's three sons were Udaji, Anandrao and Jagdev."

In 1724 Baji Rao granted a sanad to Udaji Pawar empowering him to

Owing to the troubles at home Baji Rao could not pay much attention to the affairs of Malwa. From 1725 to 1727 he was busy in the Karnatic expeditions and from 1727 to March 1728 in the war against the Nizam. Again came pressing the troubles from Sambhaji and Trimbak Rao in 1729, and he had practically to be confined to the neighbourhood of Poona and Satara, watching the movements of Sambhaji, Nizam-ul-Mulk and Trimbak Rao between August 1729 to August 1730. Therefore the only time when he could venture out into Malwa was between March 1728 and July 1729. During this time a very important expedition was undertaken and great was the gain of the Marathas.

Raja Girdhar who had been nominated to the government of Malwa for the second time in 1725 carried on a gallant struggle against the Maratha encroachment in utter disregard of the advice of Jai Singh. Besides the permanent incursions of Udaji Pawar, Ranoji Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar, Senapati Dabhade invaded it in the hot-weather of 1728,[12] and desisted only when Shahu wrote a threatening letter on 31st May, 1728. Whenever Baji Rao found an opportunity he sent his brother Chimnaji Appa to the assistance of his agents already posted there. The magnitude of the growing Maratha power could be surmised from the fact that in 1728, Udaji received a further grant of thirty-three mahals, and Malhar Rao Holkar his first grant of twelve mahals or districts, north of the Narmada.[13] In October of the same year one of the most consequential expeditions was led into Malwa.[14] Chimnaji Appa and Udaji Pawar marched at the head of a strong army with the motive of engaging Raja Girdhar. For full three years he had held his own single-handed against the disaffected local chiefs and the pre-

collect the Chauth from Malwa and Gujrat. The translation of the original given by Malcolm runs thus :—

"From Bajerow Bullal, minister, be blessed! in the year of Fusilee 1123. The half of the Mokassa (75 per cent of the chauth) of the countries of Gujrat and Malwa belongs to the court, half is granted to you as Serinjam (Saranjam) or for the support of the troops. You are our commander and our trust is in you; be happy with what has been bestowed upon you. Given, the 5th of Rubbee-ul-Awul." Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, pp. 185—7. Refer also Sardesai, Vol. I, pp. 334—36.

12 Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 225.

13 Malcolm, Vol. I, p. 146.

14 Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 324.

datory Marathas. Now in utter despair he appealed to Delhi for help, which he never received. In the meanwhile, conscious of their enhanced strength and assured of the loyalty of the countryside, the Marathas came on like a blinding mist and took Raja Girdhar by surprise at Sarangpur, 50 miles to the north-east of Dewas, which was his residence. A bloody battle was fought there on the 8th December, 1728, and the Brahmin Raja fell in the fight, and his troops were dispersed. In all probability Baji Rao was either present at the battle or was in the province hard by ; for immediately after, when came the urgent request of Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand, he led the army in person from Malwa to his help. At any rate flushed with victory, the Marathas marched to the assistance of Chhatrasal against Mahammad Khan Bangash. Here Bundelkhand and Bangash demand a little digression, before the facts could be grasped in their proper setting.

Early History of Bundelkhand

Bundelkhand is the hilly, undulating country roughly bounded by the Betwa on the west and the Son on the east, the Jumna on the north and the Narmada on the south. It is traversed from the north to south by the low spurs of the Vindhya, covered by a luxuriant vegetation. On one side it touches the Doab, on the other Malwa. Owing to its uninviting and rough surface, it was never completely subdued by the Mughals.[15] The tract is about 200 miles in length from south-east to the north-west and 155 miles in breadth from the opposing angles.

The country derives its name from the Bundela Rajputs, who claim to be a branch of the Gaharwar clan. " In the 19th generation from a more or less mythical Kashi Rajah of the Gaharwar clan, one Rudra Pratap rose to importance in the western part of what is called Bundelkhand."[16] He emerged from obscurity in 1501 and in the last year of his life, 1531, he founded the town of Orchha, which he made his capital. He was killed while attempting to save a cow from the clutches of a tiger and from his loins had sprung nine sons, whose descendants now rule over all Bundelkhand comprising six large

15 Irvine, Vol. II, p. 216.
16 Irvine, Vol. II, p. 217.

states—Orchha, Datiya, Panna, Bijawar, Charkhari, Ajai-Gad and nineteen large jagirs. Bir Singh Deo Bundela, who committed the murder of Abul Fazl, at the instigation of Prince Salim, was the grandson of this Rudra Pratap. Bir Singh flourished on account of this crime but after him came the evil days of Orchha and his son Jhujhar Singh rebelled against Shahjahan, with the consequence that he was deposed and driven out, and put to death by the Gonds in the course of his flight in 1636. A contemporary of Jhujhar Singh was Champat Rai, son of Udayajit, third son of Rudra Pratap. Champat Rai had a stormy career, which came to a tragic end in 1661. At the time of his death his fourth son Chhatrasal then only twelve, was left an orphan and fugitive for life. He got his early training as a soldier under Mirza Raja Jai Singh, and when he was sent against Shivaji a few years later he left the Mughal service and went to join Shivaji, but that great Maratha advised him to return to his own country Bundelkhand and there raise his standard against the Muhammadans.[17] For the next twenty years he struggled in Bundelkhand against the Mughals till the departure of Aurangzeb from the North in 1681, drew all the resources into the Deccan and relieved the pressure on him. It was a splendid opportunity for Chhatrasal, but about 1696 he was persuaded to join the Mughal service again. On the death of Alamgir in 1707 he returned home and took part in the reduction of the Sikhs under Bahadur Shah. Throughout the reign of Farrukhsiyar he remained in favour, but after the downfall of the Sayyids he came into conflict with Mahammad Khan Bangash who had obtained the government of Allahabad in December 1720. Mahammad Khan resolved to establish full control over Bundelkhand, which lay within his subah, proceeded to cripple Chhatrasal's power. Further Chhatrasal had displeased the imperialists by helping Raja Girdhar when he was the governor of Allahabad, and a zamindar of the Doab against the Emperor. He was in fact actively aiding the Hindu revival as conceived by Raja Jai Singh. At any rate Mahammad Khan did not achieve anything in the first campaign, and then he was transferred to Gwalior for a year. The respite was most usefully spent by

[17] Irvine, Vol. II, p. 228.

Chhatrasal, who overran Baghelkhand as far as the subah of Patna. Towards the end of 1726 Mahammad Khan was reinstated in the subah of Allahabad with the special charge of putting down the Bundelas. In accordance with the order, he opened the campaign against them early in February 1727, and by steady progress drove out Chhatrasal from all his strongholds, which consequently fell into the hands of the imperialists, till Chhatrasal, Hardenarain his son and others submitted in December 1728. They all came to the camp of Bangash and lived there awaiting the orders from the court. From Delhi no answer came, and on the contrary it was rumoured at the capital that Mahammad Khan had made common cause with Chhatrasal to overthrow the Mughal imperial dynasty and set up the Afghans on the Delhi throne. The Bundelas were even urged by the courtiers to resume hostilities. Aware of the intention of the court Chhatrasal plucked up courage to renew the struggle, and wrote pressing letters to Baji Rao, then in Malwa, to come quickly to his help. Baji Rao was only too glad to seize this opportunity of interfering in Bundelkhand, which would give him access to the Doab, and started post-haste to the succour of Chhatrasal.

In the year 1729, the great Hindu festival of Holi occurred in February, and on the plea of celebrating the festival outside the Muhammadan camp Chhatrasal took leave of Mahammad Khan Bangash, in whose camp he still remained, and removed to a distance of six or seven miles to the south of the camp. Mahammad Khan entertained no suspicion about the motives of Chhatrasal, and simultaneously he allowed his troops to disperse, some to their homes, the rest to the various outposts in the newly conquered country. What remained with him did not exceed four thousand men, besides camp-followers. At this time came floating rumours, about the intended invasion of the Marathas, who were campaigning in Malwa. Lulled to a false sense of security and firm in his belief in the Bundelas, he treated the suggestion of danger from the Marathas with contempt. Consequently no preparation was made, no precaution taken. Already the army had dwindled to an insignificant number, and when the Marathas approached within 22 miles of his camp he was suddenly awakened to a sense of grave danger. In feverish excitement he

proceeded to muster an army, which was brought up to nine thousand men with great difficulty. There was no time for further preparation. An entrenchment was hastily thrown round the camp, and as much provision as could be had near by, was secured. Thus equipped, Mahammad Khan awaited the arrival of the Marathas led by Baji Rao in person and attended by Pilaji Jadhav and other celebrated leaders. His army had swollen to 70 thousand men on account of the forces of the turbulent zamindar of the province who had joined him on the way.[18] This vast army appeared within two miles of the Muhammadan camp on the 22nd March, 1729, and on the 25th Mahammad Khan made a sortie without any benefit. Soon the Marathas closed into a vast ring round the camp, and cut off all supplies from outside. The scarcity was so great that "the commonest grain cost twenty rupees a seer." In this dire distress Qaim Khan, Mahammad Khan's son approached with a substantial reinforcement and provisions to the help of his father, but before he could come within twelve miles of the beleaguered camp, he was cut off. The account of the defeat of Qaim Khan is thus given in a Marathi letter: "On the 9th Shawal (7th May, 1729) Qaim Khan with 30,000 men came against us. We fought him (at Supa). By God's grace he was defeated. We captured 3,000 horses and 13 elephants, two of these elephants have been taken by Antaji Mankeshwar and Debalji Somvanshi the sar-i-laskar, the rest are with me." At last the Rohillas made a desperate charge and cut their way into the fort of Jaitpur.[19] It was a strong fortress, and though the Marathas besieged it closely for three or four months they could not make any impression. Resolved to starve it to surrender, they systematically cut off all supplies and the garrison inside the fortress was reduced to the utmost straits. In his dire distress Mahammad Khan entreated for help from the Emperor, but he did not raise a finger to help him. Mahammad Khan's son Qaim Khan sought in vain for the assistance of Burhan-ul-Mulk the governor of Oudh and of Ali Mahammad Khan Rohilla. In the meantime Providence came to the rescue of the suffering garrison. A malignant epidemic broke out in the camp of the Marathas, and thousands

18 Irvine, Vol. II, pp. 237-38.
19 Irvine, Vol. II, pp. 238-39.

of their men died. Further the rainy season was approaching. Therefore they at last resolved to raise the siege, and hurry back to their home where the presence of Baji Rao was urgently needed on account of the troubles created by Sambhaji and his instrument Udaji Chauhan. The siege was continued by Chhatrasal alone for some time, but when he heard that Qaim Khan was coming to the deliverance of his father he offered terms to Bangash, who "was allowed to evacuate Jaitpur in August 1729, on signing a written agreement not to attack them again, but to content himself with the tribute they had formerly paid."[20]

Acquisition of One-third of Bundelkhand

In return for his timely aid, Chhatrasal ceded one-third of his kingdom to Baji Rao, yielding a revenue of 33 lakhs a year. He divided his kingdom into three portions—the first he gave to his eldest son Harde Shah, yielding an annual revenue of 42 lakhs ; the second to Jagatraj yielding an annual revenue of 36 lakhs, and the third to Baji Rao, whom he considered as his son, yielding an annual revenue of 33 lakhs. Soon after in 1731, Chhatrasal died at the age of 82, and he had left a will which contained the following three conditions :—

"1. With the exception of expeditions beyond the Jamna or the Chambal, both brothers (i.e., Hirde Shah and Jagatrai) should join Baji Rao Saheb in every campaign, and should share in the plunder and conquer lands in proportion to the troops provided by them."

"2. If Baji Rao should be involved in Deccan warfare, the two brothers should defend for at least two months the fortress of Bundelkhand."

"3. King Chhatrasal has looked on Baji Rao Saheb as his son. Baji Rao must therefore guard his (Chhatrasal's), as if they were his blood-brothers."[21]

The terms are significant of the confidence the old Chhatrasal placed in Baji Rao, and of his ulterior motives in ced-

[20] Irvine, Vol. II, p. 241. Iradat Khan gives a different account. See *Scott*, Vol. II, p. 192.

[21] Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, p. 225.

ing one-third of Bundelkhand to him. He evidently foresaw troubles from the imperialists on account of his late behaviour, and therefore to ensure the safety of his sons he drew in Baji Rao to their defence. Thus the Marathas got a foothold in Bundelkhand. If they entered Malwa through the help of Mandloi and Jai Singh, they entered Bundelkhand through the help of another Hindu—Chhatrasal. It has been already hinted, that he also favoured the cause of Hindu revival, and the above will of his, amply bears out the point. Baji Rao got Kalpi, Sagar, Jhansi, Sironj and Hardenagar for his share, and the importance of their acquisition can never be exaggerated. They brought Baji Rao into direct touch with the Doab, and with one of the imperial cities, Agra, to which Kalpi is so close. From this vantage point he was not only to dominate all Central India, but strike terror into Delhi and the Doab.

Account of Govind Pant Bundele

These new acquisitions were put in charge of Govind Pant Bundele, an agent of Baji Rao. Govind Pant played a conspicuous part till the battle of Panipat. He rose from a very obscure position. A Karhada Brahmin by birth he was brave, and keen in revenue affairs. He was the son of one Narsi Pant, Kulkarni of Barmad in the Ratnagiri district. On the death of his father he was adopted by Balaji Pant Kher, Kulkarni of the neighbouring village of Nevaren. When he was twelve or thirteen his adoptive father died, and poor Govind Pant was forced to flee from his adopted relatives on account of their rapacity and ill-treatment. He went back to the family of his own father, and poverty-stricken, soon made up his mind to migrate into the Desh in search of service. Fortunately he got an appointment under Baji Rao, as his personal attendant. On one occasion in the course of a campaign, when no fuel could be had and no food could be prepared, and the Peshwa was very hungry, Govind Pant took some firewood from a funeral pyre hard by, and quickly prepared for his master an excellent dinner. Struck with the resourcefulness of his servant, the Peshwa promoted him to a military command. He soon made his mark, and gradually rose to hold responsible positions under him, and in 1733 he was appointed to look after Baji

Rao's new acquisitions.[22] After his appointment he made several expeditions round about, and obtained several districts from the Nawab of Kurai. In one of these was situated a huge tank called Sagar. On its banks he founded a town and called it Sagar in 1736-37. Besides this he built several forts and fortified several towns in that part of Bundelkhand.

Marathas in Malwa after 1728

After the death of Girdhar Bahadur, his son Bhawani Ram was created a Raja and several officers were sent from Delhi to his aid chief among them Maharaja Jai Singh ; but no aid reached him in time. In the meanwhile Chimnaji Appa and Udaji Pawar systematically plundered the country and invested Ujjain on the 20th December, 1728. After the siege had lasted for 35 days he made a desperate charge on the Marathas, and inflicted considerable loss on them. They then retired towards Sironj.

In June 1729 Kanthaji invested Khargaon 25 miles south of Mandleshwar for four days, exacted a ransom of Rs. 50,000 and then crossed the Narmada into Malwa and raided the country round Dhar. At this time Baji Rao returned home from Bundelkhand and remained busy till August 1730 preparing for the expedition against Sambhaji.

But Jai Singh did not come to the help of Bhawani Ram, whose place in Malwa was taken by his uncle Daya Bahadur in July or August 1729. Soon after the latter's arrival he set about ordering the affairs of Malwa with great vigour, but the stumbling block was Nandlal Mandloi. Him he wanted to win over by successive threats and allurements, but nothing proved of any avail to him. He further alienated the subordinate chiefs or Thakurs of Malwa by "the oppressions and rapacious exactions imposed on them."[23] The Marathas on the other hand tried to have him by their side and often mingled flattery and frown to serve their purpose. On the whole Nandlal remained friendly to the Marathas, and here we have two letters written by Udaji Pawar and Baji Rao to him in 1729.

22 Sardesai, Vol. I, pp. 343-44.

23 Malcolm's *Central India*, Vol. I, p. 83. The whole of the footnote by Malcolm deserves careful perusal by the reader, for it contains the substance of a conversation between Sir John Malcolm and a descendant of the Chaudhury of Indore.

UDAJI'S LETTER TO NANDLAL

From Udaji to Nandlal Mandloi, dated 14th August, 1729.

"It is a month and a half or two since our officers have gone and we learn that the country has not yet been brought under our sway, and that you do not pay any attention to it. This does not become you. In Malwa we depend on you in every matter. It does not therefore look well that we cannot yet exercise our authority. We have to write to you because we are friends. But even without your help we will establish our sway, and we will not fail to do it. You will perhaps say our authority has not been acknowledged in minor parganahs. To that we say, our authority will be established there. Malwa belongs to us, and what is there to stand in our way? If by amicable means you allow us to establish our power, well and good. Whoever acts well is benefited; otherwise his fate is decided. You know everything. We need not write to you."

BAJI RAO'S LETTER TO NANDLAL

From Baji Rao to Nandlal Mandloi, dated 30th October, 1729.

"Rajashri Ganesh came to us. He informed us of several matters, from which we came to know the details. We are soon to march into that country. Lala Har Narain wrote to us for the ordering of the affairs of Malwa, and had sent an oral report also. With regard to that we have to say that if the said province is brought under our management the ryots will live in peace to the benefit of both the sides. We have written about this in detail to the Governor of Ujjain and Lala Har Narain and the aforesaid man (R. Kushaji Ganesh) will also give you an oral account. You should therefore advise them, arrive at an agreement about the territory and let both the parties work smoothly. If they do not listen to this advice, we will come in person. When our troops will march on that side, the country will be thrown out of order—it may be devastated. . . As soon as we arrive on the bank of the Narmada you should send some men of position and see us in company of a man of position from this side."[24]

It is obvious from the above two letters that the Marathas were gradually getting masterful in Malwa. Baji Rao wrote as he says above to the Governor, i.e., Daya Bahadur perhaps for

[24] Sardesai, Vol. I, pp. 324-25.

the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi. But since he would not concede to these demands of the Marathas, their invasion was inevitable. The first Maratha invasion during the regime of Daya Bahadur was undertaken in 1730, by Chimnaji Appa, who in a letter dated 24th April, 1730, writes that he had that very day returned to Poona after defeating Daya Bahadur.[25] About the time the expedition started for Malwa Daya Bahadur wrote a letter to Nandlal Mandloi. It is dated 26th November, 1729, and runs thus.

"I humbly beg to inform you that the ancient kingdom (Malwa) has remained with the dynasty of Raja Shri Girdhar Bahadur, who when in 1132 of the Malwa era the Marathas of the Deccan invaded Malwa, gave them battle at Sarangpur, and by God's grace went to heaven. But you are in that same position. With the intention of retaliating on the Southerners I went to Delhi and got the subah granted to me by the emperor. I have heard that you are highly displeased with me, and that you are following the advice of Sawai Jai Singh to make the Marathas supreme in Malwa and subdue the Nizam. How can this be! The merit of the Padshah has not become less. I am going to arrange everything according to your wishes. We have to revenge upon the Southerners."[26]

But Nandlal did not aid him. On the other hand the Marathas came on as usual in 1730 and defeated the helpless governor. A year passed and there was no change in his attitude. From October 1730 to April 1731 Chimnaji and Baji Rao were too busy in Gujrat affairs to pay any attention to Malwa. But all the while Nandlal kept good faith with them, and was making a vigorous preparation. In March 1731 Daya Bahadur learnt that he had closed all the ferries on the Narmada, and had collected an army of fifty thousand men. He thus writes on the 23rd March, 1731, to Nandlal: "We will settle the affairs of all the sardars, according as you desire, but you should not assist the enemy. We hear that you have closed all the ferries and octroi stations of Malwa, and are collecting a force of fifty thousand men. What is the reason of this? We desire to meet you—either you come to Ujjain or we go to Indore."

25 *Marathi Riyasat* by Sardesai, Vol. I, pp. 324-25.
26 *Marathi Riyasat* by Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 326.

But the Chaudhury turned a deaf ear to all his importunities. He did not even reply to his letter. His vigorous preparation inspired the governor with fear, and lest he should assist the Marathas he once again wrote to him and sent a messenger to him. On the 6th of April, 1731, he writes:—"We sent you a letter and desired to meet you but it came to naught because you did not reply. From this we cannot find out your intentions. Since you don't pay heed to our letters, many doubts arise in our mind. Firstly you are displeased with me, secondly it appears you are collecting troops to aid the Marathas. What necessity is there that you should side with the enemy!"[27] By this time, matters had gone out of his hand. Baji Rao had finished with Gujrat. On all sides his arms were victorious. After Dabhai he came down upon the Nizam, but that wary old statesman at once opened overtures for peace and promised to give Baji Rao a free hand beyond the Narmada, and to give safe passage to his troops through Khandesh. In June Baji Rao was actually at Burhanpur and from there he wrote to Nandlal assuring him that he would be in Malwa in no time. On the 20th June, 1731, he writes:—"Mayaram Joshi Waqil met us at Burhanpur, with letters from you and Sawai Jai Singh Maharaj. We came to know that contingents in our aid have been posted at Nalchha and Mandu, and that the zamindars and ryots have appealed to us being coerced by Daya Bahadur. Hence we are coming to the bank of the Rewa (Narmada). We are pleased to hear that the Chaudhuries and Qanungos of Nemar have assembled 5000 men for our help."[28]

Baji Rao was as good as his word. With 12,000 Marathas he sent Malhar Rao in advance while he remained at Burhanpur. Malhar Rao crossed the Narmada, and he entered Malwa early in October 1731. In the meantime the two contingents posted at Mandu and Nalchha had been put to flight by the governor, who had taken possession of the pass of Mandu, and held it strongly to bar the passage of the Marathas. He had run three mines and had posted 25,000 men on the pass. Unaware of these difficulties the Maratha troops came on and as they climbed up the pass, they were killed by crowds. "If

[27] *Marathi Riyasat* by Sardesai, Vol. I, pp. 326-27.
[28] *Marathi Riyasat* by Sardesai, Vol. I, pp. 326-27.

they were to proceed a little way up, the mines were to be fired and the whole army would be annihilated. At this crisis, the Rao Saheb sent timely information, and having changed the route of Mandu pass, he got them across the mountain through the Bhairon pass,"[29] three miles north-east of Mandu. Thus the Marathas were saved from destruction, and got in the rear of the imperialists. The latter had no other alternative than to abandon their position and retreat. Perhaps as they were retreating in haste, the mines accidentally exploded causing the death of a large number of Mughal troops including some of the kinsmen of Nandlal. After this discomfiture Daya Bahadur wrote for the last time on the 10th October to the Chaudhury reprimanding his conduct and requesting him not to help the Marathas. But two days later, on the 12th October dawned that fatal day which was to put an end to his entreaties and his life. While encamped at Tirelah, three or four miles to the south-west of Dhar the Marathas engaged him, defeated and slew him on the battlefield. Sawai Jai Singh, when he heard of this victory, congratulated Nandlal in a letter dated 26th October, 1731, in which he wrote:— "Thousand praises to you that at my word alone you and the rest of the sardars protected our religion in Malwa by driving out the Muhammadans from there. You have fulfilled my desire. In return for this I have written to the Peshwa to arrange the affairs of all the sardars of Malwa according to your wishes." But Nandlal did not live more than a month after this victory of Tirelah—his death occurring on the 3rd November, 1731, and could not see the ordering of the affairs of Malwa according to his wishes.

Settlement of Malwa

On the news of the victory Baji Rao crossed the Narmada and came into Malwa to make arrangements for the newly acquired territories. The settlement made by Shahu, that half the revenues should go to the royal treasury and the rest to the Peshwa for the upkeep of his military establishments, was confirmed; but a further agreement was arrived at with regard

29 *Letter of Jai Singh to the Chaudhury,* dated 26th October, 1731. Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 328.

to the territories to be acquired hereafter in Malwa. According to it, out of the revenues of the newly acquired territories 31 per cent should be paid to the royal treasury, 30 per cent should be the share of each of Sindhia and Holkar, and 9 per cent of Pawar.[30] It did not hold good for all times. Several changes were introduced into the arrangement later on, but for the time being it held good.

Mahammad Khan Appointed to Malwa

When the news about Malwa reached Delhi, the Emperor wrote to Maharaja Jai Singh in high dudgeon accusing Nandlal Mandloi and the Maharaja of perfidious conduct. "Never mind," he is said to have written "each will have his desert. Thrice did the Marathas come to Malwa and thrice were they beaten and put to flight. Once again they will be chastised and driven out. Save your skin now, for the date of an expedition is fixed."[31] Indeed the Emperor now sent Mahammad Khan Bangash, a man who had nothing else than boundless personal bravery to his credit, as the governor of the province. He remained for about two years till 1734, when he gave place to Maharaja Jai Singh.

Soon after his arrival Mahammad Khan prepared vigorously against the Marathas, who in the meantime had honey-combed the country. "It was reckoned that they had now one hundred thousand horse in the province. Fatteh Singh and others were posted with thirty thousand horse at Khimlasa, 42 miles east of Sironj ; Chimnaji and others with an equal number were in Umatwara, between the Kali Sind and Parbati rivers ; twelve thousand were still south of the Narmada ; another twelve thousand were coming up by way of Sagar."[32] The Marathas patrolling the country found it as easy to collect their blackmail, as did the governor found it difficult to induce the rajas and zamindars to come to his aid. It is said that as soon as the Marathas were propitiated these chiefs went home and did not aid the Mughals. Mahammad Khan Bangash tried to open negotiations with Shahu direct, but he was referred to the Peshwa. In disgust and despair, he sent for the

30 Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 333.
31 *Ibid.*, p. 329.
32 Irvine, Vol. II, p. 254.

Maratha leaders, and entered into agreements with them. The Marathas evacuated the province for some time, but returned as soon as the rainy season was over.

Mahammad Khan appealed to the court, but no help arrived. In the meanwhile rumours reached him that he had been superseded by a new governor. Further he had not only failed against the Marathas, he had failed to lead a campaign against Nizam-ul-Mulk, which he is said to have secretly promised to the Emperor at the time of his appointment, and on the contrary had contracted friendship with him. That was his greatest offence, and therefore he was superseded by Sawai Jai Singh in Malwa.

Marathas beyond Malwa

Repeated successes made the Marathas bolder than ever before, and since Nizam-ul-Mulk had promised to give them a free passage to the north through Khandesh (August 1731), they now felt, there was nothing that could deter them from realizing their ambition of invading Delhi—striking at the trunk. Two ways were now open to them to advance upon Delhi, either through Gujrat and Rajputana or through Malwa and Bundelkhand. Their northern advance by way of Gujrat and Rajputana was neither very convenient nor safe. Gujrat had not been fully subdued and far more difficult was the subjugation of the Rajput principalities of Jodhpur and Udaipur. The other route was more convenient. Therefore the Marathas now endeavoured to reach the heart of the empire, i.e., Delhi and Agra by way of Malwa and Bundelkhand, and the smaller Rajput states to the north. Here Baji Rao's able lieutenants Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Sindhia led the way. Actuated by the daring designs of their chief they harried the imperial territories year after year and carried fire and sword even into Rajputana, till Sawai Jai Singh saw with great remorse how his own intrigues had recoiled on himself. Every year they opened their campaign in October and closed it in June. So distressing were the woeful tales of the country they ravaged that the Wazir and the Emperor used to leave the capital and retire into the country for hunting just when the imperial intelligencers reported the Maratha invasions to the court. If the Wazir and the Emperor sought to avoid the worries by retreating into the

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countryside the Marathas were resolved never to relax till they reached the environs of Delhi. They had very good vantage points—Malwa and Bundelkhand; they had very staunch allies—the chiefs of those provinces; and very agreeable enemies—the magnificent carpet-knights of the imperial court. No wonder that Marathas did actually burn the environs of Delhi and plunder up to its gates within another three or four years.

Maratha Activities in 1734

In 1734 the Marathas spread from Gwalior to Ajmer, and were specially active in the Bhadawar country a few miles east of Agra. The Raja of the country returned from the court to stem the tide of the Maratha invasion but soon realizing the hopelessness of the task bought them off by a payment of three lakhs of rupees. Raja Jai Singh also did nothing, though he possessed an army of 30,000 horsemen and a still larger number of matchlock men, and his regime in Malwa extended for more than two years till 1736.

Maratha Activities in 1735

The next year (October 1734 to June 1735) the Maratha menace became widespread and to safeguard the Doab two imperial armies were ordered to converge on Malwa and Bundelkhand from two directions. Wazir Qamruddin Khan was to enter the eastern half and Mir Bakhshi Samsam-ud-daulah, the western half of the invaded territory. The Wazir proved more valiant than the Bakhshi, and in a series of engagements with Pilaji Jadhav in the neighbourhood of Narwar extending from the 3rd to 12th February, 1735, he won successive victories. On the approach of the hot weather he withdrew to Delhi, where he arrived on the 21st May having been preceded, eleven days earlier, by Samsam-ud-daulah, who perhaps had not accomplished anything, except conciliating the Marathas by the grant of the Chauth and twenty-two lakhs from Malwa, in consultation with Sawai Jai Singh.

Maratha Activities in 1736

In the next campaigning season, the Marathas plundered Udaipur in Mewar, Mairta and Oragon in Marwar, the imperial territory of Ajmer, and the town of Rupnagar to the north of

it. Against them were sent two armies from Delhi, that sent to the south-east was commanded by the Wazir and that to the south-west by Samsam-ud-daulah, while Sadat Khan Burhanul-Mulk, Governor of Oudh, was directed to co-operate in the neighbourhood of Agra. Allowed a free passage through Bundelkhand, Chimnaji came right up to the Jumna but did not cross it. Plundering Kora, Kalpi and Etawa he went back to Gwalior, which was besieged for some time, and later on abandoned because the Marathas could not make any impression on it. To bar their progress further north Mahammad Khan Bangash hurried to protect the ferries on the Chambal. Qamruddin Khan, who had pushed as far as Orchha again engaged Pilaji Jadhav in an action early in 1736, and put the Marathas to flight. Samsam-ud-daulah who had entered Rajputana to eject Malhar Rao from there with the help of Jai Singh fared badly and was actually defeated by that intrepid Maratha fighting in alliance with Raja Pratap Singh Hada of Bundi. In due course the Marathas returned home, and imperial commanders to Delhi.

Sick of this state of warfare the Emperor, who valued his leisure more than the defence of his empire accepted the advice of Jai Singh to give up the government of Malwa to Baji Rao, when it was strongly supported by Samsam-ud-daulah. Accordingly the Peshwa was called to confer with Jai Singh at Dholpur. There in July 1736 Baji Rao accompanied by his son and his chief lieutenants Malhar Rao Holkar, Ranoji Sindhia and Jaswant Rao Pawar met Jai Singh and the terms for an agreement were discussed between Dhondupant Purandare the Peshwa's wakil and Yadgar Khan the wakil of the Prime Minister. The Emperor granted an assignment of thirteen lakhs of rupees from the revenues of the districts to the south of the Chambal, and further allowed to levy a tribute of ten lakhs and sixty thousand rupees from the Rajput states, from Bundi and Kotah on the west to Bhadawar on the east. The latter condition was calculated to arouse hostility between the Marathas and the Rajputs, and this did not escape the keen eye of Purandare and he apprized Baji Rao of the intentions of the Mughals and their concession. Hence to frustrate the intentions of the Emperor, Baji Rao demanded at different stages of the discussion Malwa, the country of the Rohillas, the forts of Mandu, Dhar and Raisin,

the whole tract south of the Chambal as jagir, fifty lakhs from the imperial treasury or an equivalent assignment on Bengal, Allahabad, Benares, Gaya and Mathura, and lastly the right of Sardeshpandya of the six subahs of the Deccan.[33] But of all these conditions the last only was conceded by the Emperor, for he thought it would renew the hostility between the Nizam and Baji Rao. The right of Sardeshpandya consisted in realizing 5 per cent of the revenues of the Deccan from Nizam-ul-Mulk. This aroused the hostility of the Nizam, but it was not a term offered by the Emperor to Baji Rao. On the contrary Baji Rao wanted it and had it granted. And it did not connote the renewal of his struggle with the Nizam so much as it did to mark a step in advance towards securing his own domination in the Deccan. For if Shahu was the Sardeshmukh of the Deccan Baji Rao was the Sardeshpandya. If the former had a right to 10 per cent of the Deccan revenue, Baji Rao had a right to 5 per cent of it. This imperial grant to Baji Rao is more consequential than even the Deputy Governorship of Malwa later on. It at once raised him higher than all his colleagues in prestige and was calculated to make him richer too.

Maratha Activities in the Doab: Baji Rao Surprises Delhi

If the Emperor would not willingly grant the other conditions, Baji Rao resolved to force him to it. All the time the negotiations were going on, he had only suspended military operations, and as soon as he learnt the decision of the Delhi court he ordered the renewal of hostilities with greater vigour than before. He himself took a prominent part in the campaign. He left all the heavy baggage at Jaitpur with Raja Jagat Raj Bundela the second son of the late Raja Chhatrasal, and advanced with a lightning speed up to the banks of the Jumna, forty miles from Agra. Entering Bhadawar he attacked the Raja, Anuradh Singh, whom he defeated and compelled to pay twenty lakhs of rupees and ten elephants. After this initial success the Peshwa detached his able lieutenants Malhar Rao Holkar, Pilaji Jadhav and Vithoji Bole towards the Doab, and they crossed the Jumna at Rapri and harried the territories beyond it. For a time the rich and fruitful Doab was a scene of

33 Grant Duff, Vol. I, pp. 529-30; *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 74.

villages burnt, fields devastated, and the centres of quiet industry despoiled. This state of affairs was intolerable to Sadat Khan, the Governor of Oudh who had been charged with the defence of that part of the country, and he resolved to drive the Marathas out of the Doab. Nothing daunted the Marathas proceeded up the Doab, raided Firozpur and Itimadpur, only 11 miles from Agra and halted at Jalesar. They had not the slightest suspicion that an enemy could be near. But suddenly as the day dawned the troops of Sadat Khan, appeared in sight. He had come from Etawa a distance of 85 miles by forced marches. With a vast army numbering no less than 60,000, he engaged and defeated the Marathas with heavy losses on the 23rd March, 1737. Fleeing before the Muhammadan pursuers many lost their lives while crossing the fords on the Jumna. Many more had fallen on the field, and thus with an army discomfited and decimated Malhar Rao joined Baji Rao at Kotila near Gwalior. After the flight of the Marathas Sadat Khan sent an exaggerated report of his victory to the court, informing the Emperor that he had wounded Malhar Rao Holkar, and Vithoji Bole, and driven the whole Maratha army across the Chambal. He boastfully narrated in the open court what he had written to the Emperor, and the Peshwa's agent in his camp communicated this to Baji Rao. When Baji Rao was apprized of this he determined to prove to the Emperor that the report was false by burning his city, and thus making him realize that the Marathas had not gone.[34] Mounting on a fleet Arab charger, and accompanied by his favourite Muhammadan mistress Mastani, who was more than a wife in her devotion to Baji Rao, and seated on a tall and stately horse riding strirrup to stirrup with him, he covered a ten days' journey in two days and nights and surprised Delhi on the Ram-navami day. That day the Hindus of Delhi celebrated the ceremony of worshipping Bhawani Devi, outside the city, and as the Marathas appeared there they found a huge *Jatra,* or congregation of men, women and children, whom they plundered and put to flight. The plundered fugitives carried the tale to the city and from the city it reached the court. At first none believed how the Marathas could come so near but soon the scouts confirmed the news, and the condition of the court surpassed that of the

34 Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 363.

people. They were at a loss as to what they should do. All in the palace was confusion and consternation. Plans were discussed to resist the Marathas at one moment and abandoned at another as hopeless. The Emperor in his nervousness ordered all the boats on the Jumna to be seized and kept ready at the palace gate opening to the river, so that at the shortest notice, he may float down to Agra with his harem. At last after a deal of discussion in feverish excitement, it was decided that Amir Khan, Emperor's favourite should go out to resist the Marathas the next morning. Accordingly as the Mughals approached the Marathas at the break of the day, Baji Rao recognized at once from the way they rode and held their reins, that they were unsteady inexperienced troops. He lured them to a distance from near the city by a series of feint retreats and suddenly turned round to fall upon the Mughals with redoubled fury. With spear and sword they rode down on the Muhammadans, many of whom were easily unhorsed and many more perished without making an effective resistance. After making this short work of the Mughal army, the Marathas captured about a thousand riderless horses, equipped gorgeously with trapping of scarlet and gold. The Mughals fled away faster than they had come. The alarm was renewed as they entered the city. It passed from cottage to the court exaggerated a thousandfold on the way, and all now decided to evacuate the city, which they thought would soon be plundered and burnt by the devils. But Baji Rao did neither. At a moment when the imperial city of India lay at his mercy he suddenly turned back and went off towards the south-east of Delhi.

Baji Rao's Retreat

The reason of his flight was known only to Baji Rao. He had slipped in between two formidable armies of the Wazir Qamruddin Khan and Samsam-ud-daulah keeping them on each side of him at a distance of a day's march, and had appeared before Delhi. Samsam-ud-daulah, and Sadat Khan who was coming to join him after defeating the Holkar, met at Mathura, and amidst gaieties and festivities, held in honour of Sadat Khan's victory they learnt that Baji Rao had eluded the vigilance of the Wazir and Khan Dauran, and by forced marches

along unfrequented roads had passed by Fatehpur Sikri, and the country of Chudaman Jat and had surprised Delhi on the 29th March, 1737. The news stunned the generals and took all relish out of their meal. In the utmost alarm they broke up the camp, and hurried back to the capital " placing the finger of vexation on the tooth of shame." In the meantime the Wazir too had been apprized of the fact, and he quickly made for Delhi. On learning that the Wazir and the Bakhshi were drawing near, Baji Rao left the environs of Delhi by mid-day, and covered 20 miles and reached Badshahpur by evening. Here he was engaged by the Wazir just as the glimmering twilight of the evening was fading into darkness. It was an unequal contest, the overwhelming superiority of numbers being in favour of the Wazir. After a short skirmish, in which Baji Rao lost about 30 men, he retreated eight miles westward of the place and in full gallop took the road towards Rajputana. The morning found him beyond Kot Patili, ninety-three miles from the capital, and as that day (10th April) closed into evening, he was encamped at Narnol. It was impossible for the Mughals to keep pace with this lightning movement of the Marathas, and hence pursuit was never thought of by the Wazir. Besides the heat of Rajputana into which Baji Rao had retreated was very discouraging to the Mughal nobles. But Baji Rao reckoned not the " hot winds and heat like hell fire," and passed on to Ajmer by long and rapid marches and thence into Malwa. His campaigning season was fast coming to an end ; and he had sufficiently impressed the Mughals and their Emperor to make them climb down and agree to his demands. Samsam-ud-daulah once again advised the Emperor to relinquish the government of Malwa to the intrepid Marathas, and the latter had no more hesitation in accepting the proposal, after witnessing the prowess of Baji Rao. Baji Rao received the government of Malwa in addition to thirteen lakhs of rupees. That was the result of his campaign.

EFFECT OF BAJI RAO'S ATTACK

Apart from what accrued to the Marathas, the sudden dash of Baji Rao on Delhi opened the eyes of all to the Maratha menace. It was not enough, every one realized, that they

should retain Malwa, and that their activities should be confined to that province. They must be kept beyond the Narmada, and Malwa should be taken away from them. The Marathas entered Malwa through the connivance of the Rajputs, specially of Sawai Jai Singh. The allies must be overthrown, their provinces should be taken away, and the empire should be saved. Such a task was not an easy one. Qamruddin Khan, and Khan Dauran Samsam-ud-daulah, had failed. Now every one looked up to Nizam-ul-Mulk, that veteran noble of great ability and power. He had been kept away from the court because of Khan Dauran, who "brooked no rival near the throne." Now even he realized that there was the need for a man like Nizam-ul-Mulk. The Wazir, Qamruddin was more conciliating, and owing to his relationship with the Nizam, whose eldest son Ghazi-ud-din had married his eldest daughter he did not oppose the proposal. The Emperor was therefore advised by all to call the Nizam to the court and invest him with the office of chief minister. Pressing letters were written to the Nizam to come, assume the high office of Wazir, and stem the tide of Maratha invasion.

The Nizam Called to the Court

Nizam-ul-Mulk was not averse to accept the offer. The office by itself was a great inducement because of the unbounded powers and influence it carried ; and then he would be able with the vast resources of the empire to crush the Marathas and especially his hated rival Baji Rao. Nothing loth he accepted the imperial offer, and leaving his second son Nasir Jang in charge of his southern dominions he left Burhanpur on the 17th of April, and passing through Gwalior and Agra reached Delhi on the 12th of July, 1737. Fifty-five miles from the capital the Wazir met the Nizam and conducted him to the presence of the Emperor, who showered unprecedented favours on him and conferred the title of Asaf Jah, i.e., "equal in dignity to Asaf, the minister of King Solomon." A month after his arrival his eldest son Ghazi-ud-din was appointed to the government of Agra in the place of Raja Jai Singh, and to the government of Malwa in the place of Baji Rao, the condition to these appointments being that Nizam-ul-Mulk should advance into Malwa against the Marathas. Indeed that was the chief point in all

these transactions. The Nizam had thus been bribed so that he might successfully cope with the Marathas.

BAJI RAO AND THE NIZAM FOR THE LAST TIME ; THE TREATY OF DURAI SARAI

When the campaigning season opened after the rains of 1737, the Nizam started from Delhi at the head of his troops numbering about 30,000, in addition to a fine park of artillery considered the best in India, and made for Malwa. The direct route *via* Gwalior was abandoned, and that through Etawa, Kalpi and Bundelkhand was taken. From Bundelkhand he passed by Dhamoni and Sironj and halted at Bhopal on the bank of its lake in December 1737. In the meantime he had ordered Nasir Jang to engage Baji Rao in the Deccan and prevent him from coming into Malwa.

The attempt to hinder Baji Rao's march was a failure, owing partly to the want of time and partly to the defection of Nasir Jang's Maratha allies. Although Dabhade, the Senapati, and his officers, and also Raghoji Bhonsla kept aloof, Baji Rao could still muster an army of eighty thousand men. Crossing the Narmada he came into contact with the army of Nizam-ul-Mulk, near Bhopal in December 1737.[35] Here Nizam-ul-Mulk had occupied a very formidable position and had entrenched his camp with great caution. Behind him stood the fort of Bhopal and the great lake, before him ran a rivulet. His sides were protected by artificial barriers. His was really a fortified camp, and it resulted in his ruin. The Marathas found that they could not storm his position, and the best thing for them was to plunder up to the lines, and cut off all his supplies. After an initial engagement between the Marathas and one division of the imperialists with indecisive results the Nizam called his troops back and cooped them up within his entrenchments. He would not allow his troops to sally forth and engage the Marathas. Nor would he march out with all the army to give battle to them in the open. The troops resented the forced inaction, when they found the Marathas surrounding them on all sides. Baji Rao, delighted to have caught his adversary in his

35 Irvine, Vol. II, pp. 302-3.

own trap, ordered a strict blockade and cut off all supplies.[36] When Safdar Jang, the nephew of Sadat Khan Governor of Oudh, and the Raja of Kotah proceeded to convey reinforcements and provisions to the beleaguered army, they were intercepted and defeated by Malhar Rao Holkar and Jaswant Rao Pawar. On the other hand Nizam-ul-Mulk's son was prevented from coming to the rescue of his father by Chimnaji Appa, who had taken up a strong position on the Tapti ready to oppose his march. Help from Delhi was out of the question. Many a courtier at Delhi felt delighted to hear how the great circumspection of the old soldier had only recoiled on himself. The condition of the Nizam's army was growing worse day by day. Grain was selling at four seers a rupee, and starvation was staring in the face. The draught-cattle were dying in large numbers. Under such conditions the Nizam was sure to come to his knees, but Baji Rao wondered how he could have brought all this trouble upon himself. He is said to have remarked : " He is an old and experienced man ; I cannot comprehend how he got himself into this difficulty ; it will ruin him in the opinion of all India." Really it came as a surprise to every one that Baji Rao about forty years his junior could have thus entrapped this veteran soldier of a hundred battles, accompanied by a vast army and a splendid park of artillery. And so it was, and the issues of this blockade were only too clear from the beginning. Bare life and baggage were saved by his artillery, and all else was lost. His baggage was deposited in the fort of Bhopal, and then under the cover of massed battery the army gradually extricated from the trenches and retreated towards Sironj. That however was very slow, and though the Marathas could not approach them and were killed in crowds, on account of the excellent operation of the artillery yet they did not fail to harass them, and the imperialists could not cover more than three miles a day. At length Nizam-ul-Mulk opened overtures for peace and on the 16th January, 1738, at Durai Sarai, 64 miles from Sironj, a convention was signed. In his own handwriting he promised to grant to Baji Rao the whole of Malwa and the complete sovereignty of the territory between the Narmada and the Chambal, to obtain confirmation thereof from the Emperor,

[36] *Correspondence of Brahmendra Swami* by D. B. Parasnis (*Marathi*). Letter, 116.

and to use his best endeavours to obtain fifty lakhs of rupees to pay Baji Rao's expenses.

Result of Durai Sarai

Thus after years of struggle Baji Rao succeeded in realizing a part of his policy. He had struck Delhi and had terrorized the Emperor. He had won the rights of Sardeshpandya on the Deccan, and Malwa had been bestowed on him. But he had to make good his rights to these and prove his worth to the hilt before they became his. That he did at Bhopal. Now there was no doubt that he was the most capable of the Marathas. If Palkhed and Dabhai established his reputation in Maharastra, his dash on Delhi and his blockade of the Nizam at Bhopal established his reputation in India. Now he emerged as an all-India personality, and was considered as a force in Indian politics. In time to come his successors were to dominate all India. Now Baji Rao, in the name of his chief Shahu, dominated the countries between the Chambal and the Narmada. It is no mean acquisition. In his lifetime, this is the climax of his activities—the fruition of his imperial policy.

APPENDIX

Baji Rao's Letter to Chimnaji Appa from Jaipur, Dated 5th April, 1737[1]

Entrusting the camp followers to the care of Raja Jagat Raj of Bundelkhand, and sending them to Bundelkhand, we became lightly equipped. You must have come to know of the detailed information from the letters, we sent with the messenger Chaturbhuj, mentioning the retreat of our Sardars in the battle with Sadat Khan. If we were to march on him he may or may not be defeated since he is taking refuge in the fort of Agra. If we were to encamp on the confluence of the deep Jumna with the Chambal, the place abounds in ditches. If Khan Dauran and Mahammad Khan Bangash, who were coming from Delhi to Agra were to join Sadat, we shall have a formidable combination against us. Therefore it would not be advisable to encamp at the confluence. Further Sadat Khan has written to the Emperor and Amirs: "I have routed the Maratha army that had crossed the Jumna ; two thousand horsemen have been killed and two thousand more drowned in the river, Malhar Rao Holkar and Vithoba Bole have been wounded. This is the fate of Baji Rao's incursion. I will cross the Jumna, defeat the Marathas and drive them beyond the Chambal." He has sent many such false accounts. The Emperor has showed his pleasure by giving him robes of honour and necklace of pearls and elephant and a head-dress. Sadat Khan has thus glorified himself, and has belittled the other amirs. This account was sent to us once and again by Dhondo Govind. In short he has deceived the Emperor by writing that our forces have no spirit, that they are completely demoralized, and that he has annihilated them. You know the ways of the Mughals ; they do little, and write much. We must disillusion the Emperor, and it could be done in two ways—either by vanquishing Sadat or by marching on Delhi and burning it. Then alone he will come to know of the falsity

[1] *Correspondence of Brahmendra Swami* by Parasnis (*Marathi*), pp. 21—30.

of these accounts. Seeing however that Sadat Khan would not come out of Agra we determined to go to Delhi. With the thought of burning the town and making our presence felt by the Emperor, we started on the 18th March, left the royal road, and by forced marches passed through the territory of Daman Singh Chudaman Jat along the mountain side. On the border of Newatiya, Khan Dauran and Bangash went to Agra. They met Sadat Khan on the 23rd March. Dhondopant, our Wakil was with Khan Dauran. Sadat Khan sent a message to Khan Dauran to the following effect: "We have routed the forces of Baji Rao. The camp followers have taken to their heels. Baji Rao himself has gone beyond the Chambal. Are you still flattering him? Why have you retained his Wakil? You should send him away." So he sent away, Dhondo Govind. He came to us. Qamruddin Khan and Azimullah Khan came on us but we avoided an encounter with them. Leaving them to our right at a distance of 7 kos and making forced marches of 20 kos (every day) we arrived at Delhi in two days. Keeping Barapula and the temple of Kali to our right, we encamped near Kushabandi in Delhi. As for burning the city and reducing it to ashes (we thought) Delhi is an important place, and it is no use subjecting the Emperor to indignities. Secondly the Emperor and Khan Dauran desire to make peace, but the Mughals would not let them do so. Any unseemly behaviour on our part might spell ruin to our policy. So we dropped the idea of setting fire to the city and wrote to the Emperor and Raja Vakhtmal. We captured two elephants and some horses and camels that had come out of the city. Our soldiers harassed the citizens that had come out to attend the fair of Bhawani. Next day, i.e., Wednesday, Vakhtmal replied to us by order of the Emperor, asking us to send Dhondo Pant. As for sending him since we were near the city and our presence had caused some disturbance in it, we did not. We wrote to the Emperor requesting him for an escort, that we might send Dhondo Pant, and further we informed that since our presence near the city might cause some disturbances, we were going to encamp on the Jhil Talao. After sending this message we marched off. The Emperor sent Nawab Mir Hassan Khan Koka, Daroga of Khas Chauki, Nawab Amir Khan, Khoja Roz Afzu Khan, Raje Shiu Singh Jamatdar

Risale Amir, Muzaffar Khan Deputy Paymaster of the Ahadis, and Nawab Muzaffar Khan the friend of Khan Dauran with seven to eight thousand troops to Rekabganj outside the city. Rajashri Satwaji Jadhav had been gone in advance and met the Mughals. While the fighting was going on, he sent word to us, and therefore we sent Malharji Holkar, Ranoji Sindhia, Tukoji Pawar, Yashwant Rao Pawar, Manaji Paigude and Govind Hari. In the fighting the Mughals were routed and Raje Shiu with ten or twelve courtiers was killed ; Nawab Mir Hassan Khan Koka was wounded, and two hundred and fifty to three hundred of the imperial guards were killed. Four hundred men were wounded. Roz Afzu Khan and Amir Khan and Muzaffar fled into the city. Indraji Kadam in the service of Ranoji Sindhia had his two fingers blown off by a gunshot. No other man of note was killed. Some troopers were wounded and then we encamped near the Jhil Talao. When it was four *ghatikas* to sunset (i.e., 2 or 3 p.m.) we received a report that Qamruddin Khan was coming *via* Patsapur. Immediately we got ready and advanced and there was an encounter between his forces and ours. Yashwant Rao Pawar captured one elephant that had strayed to Bara. It was sunset when the horses and camels returned to our camp. As for resting at night and defeating the Mughals by surrounding them, there was the Jhil Talao sixteen kos off, Qamruddin to our right and the city in front. Secondly when Nawab Khan Dauran, Sadat and Mahammad Khan encamped at Radhakund on the 28th March, Tuesday, came to know that we had gone to Delhi they got lightly equipped and marched 32 kos with twenty-five to thirty thousand troops and halted at Badela. Next day they halted at Alawardi's nulla after marching 25 kos. Thursday morning Khan Dauran, Sadat Khan, Bangash and Qamruddin Khan would effect a junction. We would not be able to withstand them when together and the city was near. Therefore leaving the Mughals alone we encamped at a distance of four kos. On our side Firangoji Patankar was shot dead. Some five or ten common troopers and horses were wounded. The Mughals also had five or ten soldiers killed and ten or twenty wounded. On Thursday Sadat Khan, Khan Dauran and Bangash, all joined Qamruddin Khan. Their camps extended from Alawardi (Nulla) to Jhil Talao. With the intention of

luring the Mughals to pursue us and of defeating them when within our grip, we retreated *via* Rewad, Kotpatili and Manoharpur. We received the news that the Mughals were still encamped between Alawardi and Jhil Talao. Khan Dauran wrote again and again to Sawai Jai Singh. Therefore with fifteen to sixteen thousand troops and artillery he marched to Baswa, to meet them. Sawai Jai Singh writes to us in affectionate terms to leave his territory safe. Our Vyankaji Ram is with him. He (Jai Singh) makes him (Vyankaji) write to us. We do not ravage his territory. He might supply us with provisions. Abhai Singh is at Jodhpur. We shall now recover the balance of revenue from Gwalior, and if the Mughals pursue us, harass them. We shall retreat hastily doing what damage we can in the course of our flight and bringing the Mughals within our grips, vanquish them by the merit of His Majesty and blessings of our Father. Don't be anxious about us. The main point is that Khan Dauran and the Emperor are for peace. The Mughals have shown a bold front, and at their head is Sadat. If by the grace of God his pride is humbled, everything will be as we wish. We shall make peace if it is to our wishes, if not we would not. We have attached the territories round about Delhi. Further there remains, Sonpat Panipat beyond the Jumna. We shall devastate it and cause the Mughals to starve. We shall inform you whatever will happen. If perchance the Mughals were to keep to Delhi, we shall march on Agra, enter the Doab, and devastate the whole country. If Nawab Nizam created trouble and crossed the Narmada you should check him. You should do as we have instructed you above. You should defeat and harass him. There is no danger on this side ; you remove it on that side too. It would be well if you put the heelrope on the Nizam."

CHAPTER VII

PESHWA'S SUPREMACY IN THE KONKAN (1733—1739)

POLITICAL CONDITION OF THE KONKAN

IF the progress of the Maratha arms beyond the Narmada was rapid between 1731 and 1738 it was not less so beyond the Sahyadri in the Konkan. The Konkan was always a problem for the Marathas ever since the time of Shivaji. The presence of the foreigners—the Sidi, the Portuguese and the English, with their headquarters at Janjira, Goa and Bombay respectively—was a constant eyesore to the Marathas. Of these the first was the most formidable, and during the War of Maratha Independence the Sidi had gained considerable accession of power. In return for his help, Aurangzeb had rewarded him with the fortresses of Raigad, Anjanwel and Sindhudurg besides some less important ones.[1] Next to the Sidi in power were the Portuguese, who held many important points like Salsette, Bassein, Mahi and others. The English had only the barren and pestilential island of Bombay and confined their activities chiefly to commerce. They were therefore the least offensive to the Marathas. The rise of Kanhoji Angre was a brake to the power of the Sidi and a danger to the rest. He was ambitious, great as a sailor and soldier, strong and resourceful, clever and capable. He was the " master of practically the whole coast from Bombay harbour to Malvan, with a considerable tract stretching inland."[2] In spite of his strength and resources Kanhoji was not able to reduce the power of the Sidi, the Portuguese and the English. But he was not to blame. He was not only constantly at war with all of these, but he had to reckon with the rivalry of the Sawant of Wadi, and of Sambhaji of Kolhapur for a long time, for they also had portions

[1] *Life of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*) by Parasnis, p. 42; *Rajwade*, Vol. II, pp. 64-65.

[2] *A History of the Indian Wars*, by Downing, edited by W. Foster, Introduction, p. 13.

of the Konkan under them. It was on account of these independent powers,—the Sidi, the Portuguese, the English, the Angre, the Sawant of Wadi and the King of Kolhapur—that the Konkan was a scene of perpetual struggle and its condition was deplorable. Balaji Vishwanath saw this, and anxious to secure the supremacy of his chief in the Konkan, he won over Kanhoji by important cessions, which comprised sixteen mahals and ten forts, and brought about a conciliation between Kanhoji and the Sidi who were at war at that time. That was a great boon to Kanhoji, for on the one hand he was drawn into the Maratha confederacy or the feudatory system as organised by Balaji Vishwanath, and gained thereby the support of the state or the central power for combating the foreigners, and on the other he got some respite to recoup his strength after a long warfare with the Sidi.

THE SIDI, KANHOJI ANGRE AND BAJI RAO

But the one aim of Kanhoji was to free the Konkan from the clutches of the foreigners. He considered the Sidi his chief enemy, and especially so, because he retained the possession of Raigad. In this he was at one with all Maharastra. The Marathas could not bear that Raigad, which witnessed the coronation of Shivaji and contained the remains of his earthly mould, and a thousand other associations of that great king should be contaminated by the occupation of a foreigner and a Muhammadan. It was a sacrilege in the eyes of the Marathas, for Raigad was at once the symbol of the Maratha sovereignty and the shrine of Shivaji's memory. But however much they might fret and fume, the Marathas could not wrest it from the Sidi. For Kanhoji single-handed, it was impossible unless the state came to his aid. Indeed it was a point of honour for the Marathas to wrest not only Raigad but parts of the Konkan from the Sidi.

For five years after he brought about the peace between Kanhoji and the Sidi (1715), Balaji Vishwanath was too busy to turn his attention to the Konkan. He had left the business in the Konkan entirely under the control of Kanhoji. But when Baji Rao came to power he found the affairs in a hopeless confusion. Large parts had been alienated to the foreigners;

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and to the number of the existing Maratha chieftains had been added Shripat Rao Pratinidhi, who had been assigned fiefs in the northern Konkan. For the first few years he had neither time nor resources to vindicate the honour of the Marathas there. Between 1726 and 1731 he was hard put to it to secure his own position, and that of his chief against a host of determined enemies. Of these the Nizam was the most formidable and tenacious. His hand was working everywhere and we have seen how he ranged a phalanx of foes against Baji Rao in 1726. Till now there was no breach between the Sidi and Angre, though there was no love lost between them. And indeed the Sidi always tried to harass the Hindus of the Konkan and often committed outrages on them.[3] At the instigation of the Nizam he ravaged the territories below the fort of Palkhed in April 1726 ; and when a few months later war broke out between the Nizam and the Marathas he violated the treaty of 1715 and raided parts of the Konkan under Angre. Now the Marathas were bound by honour and obligation to chastise him and check his further depredations, for according to their treaty of 1719 with the Emperor they were pledged to keep peace in the Konkan which was included in the Deccan.[4] Now the Nizam was an enemy of the Emperor and when the Sidi, who professed to be a servant of the Emperor, co-operated with the Nizam in his unwarrantable proceedings, viz., making unprovoked attack, the Marathas were perfectly justified in making war on the Sidi. Simultaneously therefore with the campaign against the Nizam, was opened another against the Sidi in the Konkan, by Kanhoji Angre. But unable to cope single-handed with the Sidi he appealed to Shahu for help. In reply Shahu bade him wait till the Dashera festival was over in October (1726), when substantial aid would be sent to him.[5] The promised help could not be sent owing to the Karnatic expeditions ; and while the affairs were in this pass there occurred a regrettable incident that served to aggravate political considerations.

[3] *Life of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*), by Parasnis, p. 43.
[4] *Introduction to Rajwade's*, Vol. III, p. 11.
[5] *Life of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*), pp. 43-44.

Sidi Sat's Outrage Provokes War

That was an outrage committed by Sidi Sat, of Anjanwel, one of the governors of Sidi Yakut of Janjira, on the temple of Parsram, the most sacred spot in the Konkan. It gave unpardonable offence to Brahmendra Swami, whose saintly association with the holy shrine had enhanced the sanctity of the spot, and forced him to leave the Konkan once for all and retire to the Desh. There he persuaded Shahu and Baji Rao to destroy the Sidi root and branch, and restore the glory of Hinduism and prestige of the Brahmins. His words had the same effect on them as those of Ramdas on Shivaji.

Brahmendra Swami's Personality

Often in the east and especially in India, political considerations take a colouring from religious considerations. In the annals of India many an epoch of political greatness have followed in the wake of great religious revival. Rise of Buddhism, and revival of Brahmanism in Ancient India, the Bhakti movement and the Suffism in the Medieval, were followed by epochs of political glory. In Maharastra the Pandharpur movement, itself an offshoot of the great Bhakhti movement, was the precursor of the rise of the Marathas. To every Maratha home is familiar the beautiful episode of Shivaji's dedication of his vast kingdom at the feet of his guru Ramdas. Every student of Maratha history knows the extent of that saint's influence on the character and policy of Shivaji. And what Ramdas was to Shivaji, **Brahmendra Swami** was to Shahu and his contemporaries. Like Ramdas his saintly personality was a force in Maharastra and his personal influence was not less pronounced in the matters of high policy than in the purely private matters of the king and his people. There was hardly any notable family of Maharastra, that had not directly or indirectly come into contact with him. Shahu and Sambhaji, their queens and mothers, the Sidi of Janjira and of Anjanwel, Kanhoji Angre, Balaji Vishwanath, Baji Rao, Chimnaji, Parsoji, the Angre brothers (the sons of Kanhoji) and their wives and mothers, the Pratinidhi and not to speak of a host of minor nobles of the court and the country, visited him and kept regular correspondence with him. A man of such a great influence

and no less saintliness was offended by the governor of the Chief Sidi of Janjira, living at Anjanwel. To understand therefore the nature of the offence and its bearings on the ensuing war we have to sketch the life of Brahmendra Swami.

Life of Brahmendra Swami

In the village of Dudhewadi, in Berar, there lived a Rigvedi Brahmin of the Desh, by name Mahadeo Bhat, whose wife Uma Bai bore him a son by name Vishnu about the year 1649.[6] From his early boyhood Vishnu showed signs of godliness, and great aptitude for the sacred lore. While still receiving education under his father, he lost his parents at the age of twelve, and went to Rajuri where he devoted himself to the worship of Ganpati.[7] But every year he used to spend the period from the 1st of Shrawan to the 4th of Bhadrapad, a little more than a month in deep contemplation on God. When he was fourteen, i.e., in 1663 he went to Benares. There he took the vow of Sanyas or renunciation, and the significant title of Brahmendra Swami.[8] After some time he left Benares and travelled all over India from the Himalayas to Rameshwaram visiting all the holy places. At last he came to the banks of the Krishna and witnessing the deplorable condition of the country he crossed the Sahyadri and went into the Konkan. There in a village called Pedhe, near Chiplun, was an old temple of Parsram, and to the west of it by the village Dhamni Songaon stretched a wild tract, in which the Swami found out a beautiful spot for himself and began to practise penances. Often a cowherd named Balgauli would come into the wood with his cattle and see the ascetic absorbed in deep meditation.[9] Gradually their frequent meeting ripened into intimacy, and the cowherd became devoted to the saint. Balgauli talked about the power and attainments of the saint in the village, and soon vast crowds were attracted to the spot where all alone the Swami spent days and months in quiet contemplation. Gradually his name

[6] *Brahmendra Swami's Life* (*Marathi*), by Parasnis, p. 1.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[9] *Life of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*), p. 5.

spread through all Maharastra and about this time came Balaji Vishwanath who was then engaged in the work of salt manufacture at Chiplun, a famous port under the Abyssinians. He too was favourably impressed by the hard penances of the Swami, and became devoted to him.[10] Balaji Vishwanath, long before he attracted Shahu's notice, had the prophecy of the Swami, that he would rise to the highest position in the state.[11] When Shahu returned to Maharastra, the Swami had the wisdom to support his cause and to persuade Balaji Vishwanath to do the same. In course of time he collected from his followers sufficient funds for the repairs of the temple of Parsram, and restored it to its former condition. His influence was not confined to his co-religionists only. Rasul Yakut Khan of Janjira revered him so much that he granted the villages of Ambadas and Pedhe in religious endowment to him.[12] Balaji Vishwanath, when he became Peshwa, requited his gratitude by bestowing the village of Pipri on him, and by further inducing the king Shahu to grant him the village Dhavadshi near Satara. Of the Maratha chieftains the Pratinidhi Parsram Pant, and Kanhoji Angre had been assigned the Konkan for their fiefs. In course of time they became acquainted with the Swami, and the Pratinidhi further endowed him with two villages Dorle and Mahalunge. Thus with the increase of reputation increased the wealth of the Swami. Himself leading the life of an ascetic and renouncing all worldly attachments, he invested his large incomes in loans. Not only did the leading nobles of Maharastra come to seek his advice on important affairs, they also came to seek money from him. Balaji Vishwanath and Baji Rao had taken large sums from him. In 1725 Shahu gave him two more villages, and in 1726 he possessed eight in all.

THE GENESIS OF THE WAR

Every year he used to go out on a tour collecting alms from his followers, who were amongst the powerful and rich in the

10 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

12 *Life of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*), pp. 10-11.

country. When in 1726 he set out for the Karnatic, Sidi Sat of Anjanwel requested him to bring with him from Suvanoor a remarkably fine elephant, which the Nawab of that place had given the Sidi as a present. It was because the Karnatic expedition was going on at this time, and Sidi Yakut incited by the Nizam, had begun hostilities in the Konkan, the beast could not be brought safely home through the territories of the belligerent powers, viz., Shahu and Angre, except by the Swami, who had a great influence with the Maratha chiefs. The Swami took upon himself the responsibility of conveying the beast safe to its master, and his influence prevailed in obtaining dustaks or permits for the passage of the beast through the country. As he crossed the Vishalgad pass safely with the elephant into the Konkan, he thought all trouble was over, and neglected to obtain a permit from Kanhoji Angre through whose territory the elephant had next to pass. Besides he expected no trouble from Angre who was his devoted admirer. Therefore with a sense of relief he sent the elephant ahead, and himself followed leisurely. But when the elephant reached the outpost of Makhjan, beyond Sangameshwar the officers of Angre discovered that the elephant belonged to the Sidi and had no permit from their chief. Therefore they seized it and sent it to Jaigad. Before long the news reached Sidi Sat at Anjanwel, and Brahmendra Swami, coming behind. The Sidi highly incensed at this forcible detention of his elephant immediately despatched some troops to Jaigad for its release but they were put to flight by Angre's men. This added fuel to the fire, and the Sidi suspecting the complicity of the Swami in the affair led an army to the spot where the temple of Parsram stood, and on the holy Shivratri day, when huge crowds of men and women had congregated to worship the God Shiva, he desecrated and destroyed the temple and stripped it of all its wealth. The people and the priests were subjected to torture to disgorge all they owned. In the meantime the Swami, unaware of the proceedings of the Sidi had prevailed over Kanhoji to let off the elephant. But when he came to know of the outrage of the Sidi, he could not restrain his anger and cursed him that since he had wrought evil on the gods and the Brahmins, his destruction was imminent. Nevertheless he sent the elephant to him, and came to the temple of Parsram

only to see that it had been reduced to a heap of ruins. In utter disgust he determined to leave the Konkan and to come to the Desh. When the chief Sidi, Yakut of Janjira was apprized of this outrage committed by his officer he deeply regretted it, made Sidi Sat restore all the wealth he had taken from the temple, and promised to rebuild it.[13] Kanhoji Angre also pressed the anchorite to remain in the Konkan and at last bound him on an oath to do so. The Swami remained another year but it served only to deepen his disgust, for Sidi Sat did not refrain from troubling him furthermore. Now Angre realized the outward position of the Swami and his own helplessness to remedy it. Therefore he freed the Swami from bindings of the oath,[14] and let him go to the Desh and suggested that he should persuade Baji Rao to co-operate with him in the destruction of the Sidi. In 1728 the Swami "shook from off his feet the dust of the Konkan and ascending the ghats went to live in Dhavadshi."[15] There he was given a warm reception by Shahu, his queens and the great Maratha nobles, and there he remained till the end of his days, constantly preaching crusades against the hated barbarians—the Abyssinians.

WAR BETWEEN THE SIDI AND SHAHU

This outrage of Sidi Sat intensified the indignation of the Marathas against him, and since the hostilities had begun between him and Kanhoji about the middle of 1726, Shahu was awaiting an opportunity to assist the latter with armed force. The Karnatic expeditions came to a close in 1727, and by the beginning of 1728 arrived **Brahmendra Swami** at Dhavadshi. Soon after the Pratinidhi was sent against the Sidi. At this time Baji Rao was busy in the campaign against the Nizam, and the Pratinidhi was selected because he had jagir in the Konkan. To aid him was sent Pilaji Jadhav. The latter was to march against the Portuguese and prevent them from coming to the assistance of the Sidi, for the Sidi and the Portuguese were on friendly terms. Baji Rao was actuated, it is said, by vindictive motives when he entrusted the Konkan campaign to

13 *Life of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*), pp. 19—22.
14 *Rajwade*, Vol. III, Letter No. 180.
15 *Life of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*), p. 34.

the Pratinidhi and Pilaji Jadhav, for they were leaders of the party opposed to him, and his interest lay in keeping them away from the court at this time.[16] The Pratinidhi without understanding the designs of the Nizam, was at one with him, and Baji Rao was hard put to it to frustrate them. Fortunately for Baji Rao came at this time Brahmendra Swami, a tried friend of his family and a staunch supporter of his policy, and threw into the scale against the Pratinidhi his powerful influence. Shahu was soon disillusioned about the false friendship of the Nizam and was exhorted to rely entirely on Baji Rao. Not long after this, came the culminating victory of Baji Rao over the Nizam and the treaty of Mungi Shegaon in March 1728. Baji Rao thus threw his adversaries completely into the shade, when in contrast to his brilliant victory, it was reported that the Pratinidhi had achieved nothing in the Konkan. In 1729 Baji Rao threw Pilaji Jadhav out of office, and he had to dangle about till 1730. During this period the Pratinidhi wasted time, and nothing appreciable was accomplished. On the other hand owing to the death of Kanhoji in 1729 the Sidi grew very defiant and took advantage of the family squabbles between Angre's sons to aggrandize at their expense.[17] Early in 1730 the campaign was renewed, when the Pratinidhi was sent towards Kolaba and Ratnagiri,[18] and Pilaji towards Kolwan against the Portuguese. This too was barren of results,[19] partly because the Pratinidhi was soon recalled on his own request to take the command of the troops against Sambhaji in November 1730 and partly because Saikhoji, the son of the deceased Kanhoji, would not help the Pratinidhi at the instigation of Baji Rao, the latter's rival.[20] In 1730 and 1731 the affairs of the Konkan fell into disorder on account of the jealousy subsisting between Saikhoji and Sambhaji, the two sons of Kanhoji Angre. It was fanned by Baji Rao and Brahmendra Swami, with the consequence that their power was weakened and that of the Peshwa automatically grew. In 1731 Sambhaji quarrelled with

16 Introduction to *Rajwade's*, Vol. III, pp. 22, 23.
17 *Life of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*), pp. 44, 45.
18 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 59.
19 *Rajwade*, Vol. III, Letter No. 249.
20 *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. 23.

his brother Saikhoji, and went to Suvarnadurg south of Kolaba, and made it the headquarters of his fleet. He even wanted to issue a new coinage. Shahu called them to Satara to bring about a reconciliation, but they would not come together. Hence his attempts were futile, and the Peshwa backed Saikhoji against his brother. In an interview with him in 1732, he persuaded Saikhoji to throw in his lot with his party against the Pratinidhi.[21] But the result of the quarrels between Saikhoji and Sambhaji however was, that the operation of the Marathas in the Konkan was seriously hampered, and that was to the advantage of the Sidi.[22] So far the affairs of the Konkan were unsettled. The Pratinidhi and the Angres had failed to make an impression on the Sidi, who had become more presumptuous since after the death of Kanhoji Angre. But so far Baji Rao was too busy elsewhere to pay personal attention to the affairs of the Konkan. By the end of 1732 he felt comparatively free. The victory of Dabhai and the final settlement with the Nizam in August 1731, had rid him of his enemies and raised him in the estimation of all, and made him practically the head of the Maratha affairs. He dominated everywhere, except in the Konkan. It was really an insult to his domineering nature, and he now resolved to take up the affairs of the Konkan in hand and give a finishing touch to them.

Baji Rao and the Konkan

But there were some practical difficulties in the way. No less than half a dozen chiefs, foreigner and Maratha, had parcelled out the Konkan between them. Of the foreigners the Sidi was the most powerful, and next to him the Portuguese ; of the Maratha chiefs Angre was only powerful. These three have to be reduced before Baji Rao's power was supreme in the Konkan. This he accomplished during the years from 1733 to 1739. At the end of these six years, the Sidi had been humiliated, the Portuguese worsted, and Angre completely broken. When in 1733 Baji Rao found himself comparatively free from other preoccupations, and turned his eyes to the Kon-

21 *Rajwade*, Vol. III, Introduction, p. 25.
22 *Rajwade*, Vol. III, Introduction, pp. 20-21.

kan, he was helped a good deal by a favourable turn of affairs there.

Pratinidhi in Charge of the Konkan Operations again

Once again in 1732, Shahu deputed Shripat Rao Pratinidhi into the Konkan, and Saikhoji sent Bankaji Naik to his aid. In March of that year the Pratinidhi laid siege to Anjanwel, and about the same time Bankaji Naik engaged Sidi Sat in a tough fight at Chiplun and defeated him.[23] From Chiplun he passed on to Goalkot, which he wanted to invest, but there he met the Pratinidhi, who had already been interviewed by the Sidi and had been persuaded to the belief that he (Sidi) would pay his respects in person to Shahu at Satara and stop the war provided the Angre was driven[24] out of the Konkan. In doing this the Sidi simply wanted to play upon the feelings of the Pratinidhi whose enmity towards Baji Rao and his partisan Saikhoji was well-known to him. Dare not communicate this to king Shahu, the Pratinidhi made unseemly proposal to Bankaji Naik, who spurned them, and went back to his chief Saikhoji Angre.[25] His retirement brought out the Sidi in his true colours, and his former friendliness soon changed into hostility against the Pratinidhi. Indolent and incapable, the Pratinidhi allowed himself to be constantly harassed by the Sidi.[26] When Shahu heard all about his proceedings he appointed Baji Rao to take the supreme command there, and wrote pressing letters to him to come back to Satara.[27] The repeated failures and the consequent disgrace that the Pratinidhi had brought on himself, spurred Baji Rao on to shake off his indifference, and seize the opportunity to prove his superiority over his adversary.

Baji Rao undertakes the Konkan Campaign

He was further induced to undertake the campaign by another favourable circumstance. That was the death of Sidi Rasul Yakut, the chief of the Sidis, in February 1733. His

23 *Rajwade*, Vol. III, Letter No. 305.
24 *Rajwade*, Vol. III, Letter No. 330.
25 *Rajwade*, Vol. III, Letter No. 331.
26 *Rajwade*, Vol. III, Introduction, p. 24.
27 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

death was the signal for a civil war in his kingdom. At first there began serious trouble with regard to the succession. Sidi Yakut had left a number of sons of whom Abdulla was the eldest and the rightful heir to the throne.[28] But his claim was disputed not only by his brothers, but by his own son Sidi Rahman. The trouble over the succession was further aggravated by the defiant attitude of the governors. Sidi Yakut had seven governors under him in his lifetime, and of them one Shaikh Yakub Khan, a Hindu convert was the most capable and recalcitrant. He had proved rebellious even during Yakut Khan's lifetime.[29] Powerful as a governor and daring as a sailor, he was highly ambitious, and he showed his hand to the quarrelling Sidi princes, soon after the death of their father. These civil strifes were fomented by a Prabhu Sardar Yashwant Rao Potnis who had been sent into the Konkan by Shahu for that purpose. He succeeded admirably in his intrigues and so artfully did he sow dissension amongst them that he won over Sidi Rahman, the son and rival of Sidi Abdulla, and Shaikh Yakub Khan, the powerful governor. The former actually fled from Janjira and came to the shelter of the Potnis, when he found that his uncles had shut the gates of the fort against him and had seized his father and had murdered him.[30] The latter was promised the command of the fleet and a large portion of the possessions of the Sidi for his adherence to the Marathas.[31] When the ground had thus been prepared, Shahu put Baji Rao in charge of the expedition against the Sidi. In a council of war called at Satara it was decided that the Pratinidhi should start in advance, and Baji Rao and Fatteh Singh Bhonsla should follow him with the main body of the army. Inactive, and averse to co-operate with his opponent, the Pratinidhi did not get ready in time, and instead of preceding Baji Rao and Fatteh Singh into the Konkan he went a month later. Baji Rao and Fatteh Singh arrived in the Konkan in April 1733, and opened the campaign with great vigour.[32]

28 *Life of Brahmendra Swami (Marathi)*, pp. 49-50.

29 *Rajwade*, Vol. IV, *Peshwanchi Bakhar, Chronicle of the Peshwas*, p. 39.

30 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, pp. 88-89.

31 *Rajwade*, Vol. IV, *Peshwanchi Bakhar*, p. 40; *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 65.

32 Sardesai, Vol. I, pp. 249-50.

Baji Rao made his presence felt in the Konkan by taking the fortresses of Tala and Ghosala, soon after his arrival. In May he met Saikhoji Angre at Dandrajpuri. Early in the month, Sidi Abdulla was murdered in the fort of Janjira and one of rest was defeated at Dandrajpuri. The defeat at Dandrajpuri forced all the Sidi princes to retire into Janjira where they vigorously prepared to stand a long siege. But close on their heels came Baji Rao and opened fire on the fortress from the mainland. Manaji Angre, Saikhoji's brother, attacked it from the sea, and destroyed the protecting fleet of the Sidi.[33] In spite of the admirable work done both on land and sea the fortress defied all attempts of its besiegers, and the garrison maintained their defence as bravely as before. The Sidi further appealed to the Portuguese at Chaul, the English at Bombay, the Mughals at Surat and the Nizam at Haiderabad for help. In the meantime the Marathas looted Khokari, Antone, Nagothane, Ashradhara, Avchitgad, Virvadi, Nizampur, besides many other places of the Sidi.[34] But Sidi's appeal met with a very indifferent response. The Portuguese sent two ships apparently to mediate between the belligerent powers, but really to help the Sidi should that be necessary.[35] The Mughals wrote to the English to come to the help of the Sidi, but they cleverly excused themselves by saying that their chief concern was trade and they could assist the Sidi if men and money were sent to them by the Mughals. There was an end to the affair.

But the Marathas did not fare any the better for it. On 20th May started the Pratinidhi, with Anand Rao Sarlaskar, Krishnaji Dabhade and other chiefs to the help of Baji Rao. His advent into the campaign chilled the ardour of Baji Rao,[36] and he grew indifferent. In spite of that, the Pratinidhi conquered Raigad on the 8th June, 1733, by the clever intrigues of Yashwant Rao.[37] This was highly admired by the Marathas, and their honour was thus vindicated. A little later Bankaji Naik occupied Bankot and Mandangad fortresses, and led his

[33] *Life of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*), p. 50.
[34] *Ibid.*; *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 68.
[35] Sen, *Military System of the Marathas*, p. 215.
[36] *Rajwade*, Vol. III, Introduction.
[37] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 68.

victorious armies on Goalkot and Anjanwel. A contested battle was fought at Goalkot on the 8th of July, and Bankaji Naik won a brilliant victory over the Sidi. But the latter fled into the fortress after the defeat and did not surrender it.

The English Aid the Sidi

By July a considerable portion of the dominions of the Sidi had come under the possession of the Marathas. Except Janjira, Anjanwel, Goalkot and two or three other strongly fortified points, nothing remained to him. The predominating position of the Marathas thus upset the balance of power in the Konkan. This awakened the English to a sense of danger, for they had already suffered at the hands of Angre, and now if his power was to be supreme in the Konkan it would portend ill for their safety. Besides, Saikhoji had recently captured an English ship called *The Rose*, which he held to ransom for 7603 rupees, and thus the English had been sufficiently wronged to pay him back when an opportunity offered. Therefore they now sent a battleship called *Mary* under Captain Haldane with a force to aid the Sidi in defending his island of Underi, which Angre was besieging. She arrived there on the 16th July, but so terrible was the onslaught of Angre that the English had to retire without achieving any success. In September they fitted out another squadron for the help of the Sidi and that very month occurred the death of Saikhoji Angre.[38] This was an untoward event for the Marathas, for on his death ensued domestic strifes between Sambhaji and Manaji each of whom claimed the headship of the Maratha fleet. Shahu fearing to give offence, would not appoint a single Commander-in-Chief, but sent separate orders to each divisional general and tried to conduct the campaign from his palace at Satara. The consequence was that the command of the sea passed into the hands of the Sidi and the English, who now entered into an alliance, against the Marathas.[39] On the other hand the Nizam began his intrigues in favour of the Sidi, and therefore Chimnaji Appa

38 *Rajwade*, Vol. III, Introduction, p. 31; *Life of Brahmendra Swami (Marathi)*, p. 51.

39 *Surat Factory Diary* (Bombay Records, Unpublished), Vol. 618, pp. 5—12.

had to be stationed at Poona to keep an eye on his movements. Chimnaji did not proceed to the Konkan even though Shahu wrote repeatedly to that effect. From Surat came the intelligence, almost simultaneously that Sidi Masud was coming to the help of the Sidi of Janjira. Uma Bai Dabhade Trimbak Rao's mother, and Damaji Gaikwad, who were ordered to check his progress, did not make the slightest movement on account of their hostility with Baji Rao, and consequently help from Surat reached Janjira towards the end of September. To add to this there was the standing jealousy between the Peshwa and the Pratinidhi, and Shaikh Yakub had grown indifferent to the Marathas. He kept aloof after the setting in of the rains, and turned his face definitely away from the Marathas at the beginning of the cold weather. The cumulative effect of all these occurrences was that the Maratha activities were hampered and the campaign that had promised so well at the beginning, was coming to an unhappy termination. But it did not deter the Angre brothers from indulging in unseemly proceedings. On the death of Saikhoji, Sambhaji left Vijaydurg and came to Kolaba, and took up the command of the fleet. Manaji his brother and rival flew to the arms of the Peshwa, whose enmity with Sambhaji, inclined him to support Manaji in his quarrel against his brother. The English too volunteered their services to him for wresting Kolaba from Sambhaji and actually despatched a squadron to his help. In October arrived Chimnaji Appa in the Konkan, with the order that he should not return without taking Janjira. Bankaji Naik was summoned to his assistance; but all to no avail. The quarrels between the Angre brothers frustrated all the ambitious designs of Baji Rao, and the Konkan campaign appeared to end in an ignominious failure.

Resumption of Hostilities after Baji Rao Vainly Tries for Peace

Realizing full well the difficulties of the situation, viz., loss of the control of the sea, lack of harmonious co-operation between the different chieftains and the alienation of Shaikh Yakub, Baji Rao, who was besieging Janjira all the while, now wanted to end the affair by an honourable peace before the Maratha arms suffered any reverses, and the situation took an untoward

turn against them.[40] In December 1733, a treaty was concluded, near Ali Bag, according to which Baji Rao recognized Abdul Rahman as the chief of Janjira, retained the fortresses of Raigad and Mahad, and five and a half Mahals of the Sidi, and restored the rest to him.[41] After this treaty Baji Rao returned to Satara early in 1734. The treaty crippled the power of the Sidi, and left the Peshwa, who added two fortresses and five and a half Mahals to his former possessions, supreme in the Konkan. But such a conclusion of the war satisfied neither Shahu nor Brahmendra Swami ; for Anjanwel and Goalkot still remained under Sidi Sat and they were in the neighbourhood of the shrine of Parsram. So long as the shrine of Parsram, they urged, was exposed to danger by the presence of the Sidi hard by, and Anjanwel and Goalkot were not conquered, there can be no cessation of the war. Therefore when Baji Rao returned, his opponents Sambhaji Angre and the Pratinidhi continued the campaign by the orders of Shahu. Further it was to their own interest to drive out Sidi Sat from Goalkot and Anjanwel, and to occupy them. Shahu ordered Udaji Pawar, Deorao Meghshyam, Hari Moreshwar Rajajnya, Shaikh Mira, Baji Bhiurao and other sardars to aid the Pratinidhi and with Sambhaji in the task.[42] But their attempts were not crowned with success owing to the lack of siege guns and ammunition.[43] The quarrels between Sambhaji and Manaji further impeded their progress. In 1735 Pilaji Jadhav was sent there by Shahu, and even Baji Rao came to aid them between February and April of 1735[44] ; but all to no purpose. Another year passed by, and in the meantime Sidi Sat grew more powerful. He now took the aggressive, and actually raided the newly conquered territories of the Marathas. Such presumption as this could not be tolerated by Shahu, and he deputed Chimnaji Appa to put a stop to his ambition. When he arrived in the Konkan on 20th March, 1736, Sidi Sat was besieging the fortress of Sagargad near the port of Rewas on the

40 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 69.
41 *Rajwade*, Vol. III, Introduction, p. 30.
42 *Life of Brahmendra Swami*, pp. 53, 54.
43 *Ibid.*, pp. 54—56.
44 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 71.

Nagothane creek. On the news of Chimnaji's arrival, Sidi Sat came with a firm determination to give battle, and to win a victory or to die fighting on the field. A bloody battle ensued at the village of Sharai near Rewas on the 19th of April, 1736, and the Sidi was defeated and slain.[45] In this battle also fell Sidi Yakub the commandant of the fort of Underi.[46]

Conclusion of the War, and its Results

The Marathas won the victory at a heavy cost and the death of Sidi Sat lightened the anxiety of Brahmendra Swami and Shahu. Sidi Rahman of Janjira came forward with terms of peace, and on the promise of friendship with the Peshwa the war was brought to a close. Anjanwel and Goalkot however remained in the hands of the Sidi. The new treaty was concluded on the 25th November, 1736, on the basis of the old one of 1733. It simply confirmed the supremacy of the Peshwa, and henceforth his authority obtained unchallenged, in the Konkan. The Sidi was left bankrupt in power and prestige, and fast sank into a subordinate position.

The authority of the Peshwa obtained unchallenged in the Konkan in 1736, not only because the Sidi had been crippled, but also because the powerful house of Angre had been brought to the verge of ruin by their domestic quarrels. The Peshwa, who always watched his opportunity to lay hands on the weakest points of others, so that he might impose his own superiority on them, at once stepped in when Sambhaji and Manaji quarrelled for the command of the Maratha fleet, and for the possessions of their brother Saikhoji Angre.[47] Baji Rao who could not find a way to reconcile them, divided the authority and possessions between them. This division weakened the strength and resources of the Angres. To understand in its proper perspective the nature of the quarrel and the consequent division of authority a little outline of the family history is necessary.

[45] *Life of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*), p. 60.
[46] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 73.
[47] *Rajwade*, Vol. III, Introduction, pp. 36-37.

History of the Angre Brothers and Policy of Baji Rao Towards Them

Kanhoji Angre had three wives—Mathura Bai, Lakshmi Bai and Gahina Bai, besides some concubines. It is difficult to ascertain, which of his sons was born to which of his wives or concubines. Of his six sons however Saikhoji and Sambhaji were older than the rest four—Yesaji, Manaji, Tulaji and Dhondoji. After the death of Kanhoji, Saikhoji succeeded to his office, but even then Sambhaji's jealousy towards his brother was too manifest to maintain the harmony of the family. Saikhoji died in 1733 and then ensued a bitter struggle between Sambhaji and Manaji for power and possessions. At the court of Shahu, the Deccanee party, i.e., party of the Pratinidhi always backed Sambhaji while the Peshwa's party backed Manaji. Baji Rao had conceived a deep-rooted prejudice against Sambhaji even during the lifetime of Saikhoji. This prejudice was further intensified by the insinuations of Brahmendra Swami, who it is said nourished at heart a violent rancour against the Angres. Since 1728, when he left the Konkan for the Desh, he had been reminding the Angres of their debt to him ; but none of them—neither Kanhoji, nor Saikhoji nor Sambhaji—would care to pay. Therefore he always censured them for their irreverent attitude, and often tried to poison the ears of the Peshwa against them.[48] The ill-success in the Konkan campaign served to alienate the sympathies of the Peshwa, for he knew it was owing to their domestic quarrels that the promises held out by the opening stage of the campaign were not fulfilled. He never believed in the efficiency of divided authority, and domineering as he was by nature, he was convinced that unless all the chiefs in the Konkan were brought under his subjection, there cannot be peace and prosperity. After the humiliation of the Sidi he set forth to impair the strength of the Angres by fomenting their quarrels. His task was rendered easy because they played into his hands. The matter came to a head early in 1734 when Sambhaji started to wrest Anjanwel from Sidi Sat, and left Manaji in charge of the fleet and Dhondoji in charge of the civil affairs at Kolaba. Ambitious and

48 *Rajwade,* Vol. III, Introduction, pp. 19—22.

unscrupulous, Manaji did not like this arrangement, and hardly had Sambhaji's back been turned upon him when he called in the aid of the Portuguese in return for important cessions, viz., the fort of Count Sandomil and lands of Revdanda, seized and put out the eyes of Yesaji and made Tulaji the head of civil affairs. When Sambhaji came to know of all these proceedings, he started for Kolaba in a terrible fury, but was beaten off by the allies. When Sambhaji retired to Suvarnadurg, Manaji broke his pledge to the Portuguese and did not make the promised cessions.[49] So the Portuguese withheld their help and their contingent was recalled. Sambhaji utilized this opportunity by attacking Kolaba for the second time and drove out Manaji, who now fled to Revdanda near Chaul. Since he had no hopes of getting Portuguese help now, he implored the help of the Peshwa offering the cession of Kothala and Rajmachi in return, and the latter hastened to Pali to the assistance of his protege. Baji Rao remained near Kolaba for about two months, 4th February to 3rd April, 1735, and tried to effect an agreement between the quarrelling brothers. With an inclination to offend neither, but anxious to decimate their strength he put Manaji in the possession of Kolaba and bestowed on him the title of Wazartmav, and put Sambhaji in possession of Suvarnadurg and gave him the title of " Sarkhel, " i.e., Admiral.[50]

Consequence of Baji Rao's Policy Towards the Angres

This arrangement was liked neither by Sambhaji nor by his partisan the Pratinidhi, who urged Shahu to stop the division of power and possession of Angres. Much as Shahu approved of it, he could not effect it, and indeed in view of the situation it was dangerous. Baji Rao openly gave offence to Sambhaji during his stay in the Konkan, between June and July of 1736, and that drove him to a bitterness and undesirable proceedings, that resulted in the war with the Portuguese. The civil strifes continued even after the Portuguese had been worst-

[49] *Life of Shahu Maharaj the Elder* (*Marathi*), p. 91; *Life of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*), p. 68.

[50] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, pp. 71-72.

ed in 1739. The inevitable consequence was the utter ruin of the house of Angre. It began with the policy of dividing the power and possessions of the house in 1735 and ended with its complete destruction twenty years later in 1755.

HOSTILITY BETWEEN THE PORTUGUESE AND THE MARATHAS : THE FIRST PHASE (1731-32)

By 1736 Baji Rao had succeeded in crippling the power of the Sidi and Angre. There remained only the Portuguese, whose power broken, the Peshwa would be free from all anxiety about the Konkan. The Portuguese stepped into the domestic disputes of the Angre brothers at the invitation of Sambhaji. But long before, there existed causes of war, and the relations between the Portuguese and the Marathas had been strained. The Portuguese had touched the shores of India in the year 1498, and by the end of the next century they had firmly planted their power on the west coast. Goa had been conquered in 1510, and Bassein in 1533. But by the close of the 17th century their power was perceptibly declining, and this synchronised with the rise of the Marathas. During the short glamour of their power, the Portuguese had done everything to alienate the sympathy and loyalty of their Hindu subjects. They made forcible conversions, and stopped all religious practices of the Hindus. They demolished their temples and built churches instead. Hindu children when found alone were often stolen and converted to Christianity. Indeed the tyranny was so painful that most of the Hindus left their homelands and came to seek shelter in Maharastra. Of these the Pathare Prabhus of Sasti or Salsette, who had fled first to Kelve and then to Anjur were determined to bring about the destruction of the tyrants. Their leader Gangaji Naik, with his brother Bubaji Naik first approached Sambhaji for the purpose, but it was of no avail. Next he approached Kanhoji Angre and Khanderao Dabhade with no better results. When in 1720, Baji Rao's sway was established in Kalyan by his brother-in law, Ramchandra Mahadeo Joshi Chaskar, he pressed the latter to influence the Peshwa to undertake the reduction of the Portuguese. On the other hand Gangaji promised his invaluable help in showing the routes into the Portuguese possessions, and the weak points of their strongholds. The Peshwa readily

consented, but owing to a series of circumstances over which he had no control, operations against the Portuguese had to be put off indefinitely. In 1730 Antaji Raghunath and Ramchandra Raghunath, Desai and Deshpande of Malad in Bassein, approached Baji Rao and impressed upon him the need for a speedy action against the Portuguese. Now Baji Rao had begun to feel his power, and his was the rising star in Maharastra. He deputed Pilaji Jadhav early in 1731 against the Portuguese and despatched reinforcements under his brother-in-law Krishnaji Mahadeo.[51] They reduced Cambay and captured 12 guns of the Portuguese and fought a bloody battle at Manohar on the 27th of February, 1731, in which the Portuguese suffered a severe defeat. The decisive results of the campaign led to the discussion of terms for a peace, and further hostilities ceased for some time.

Hostility between the Portuguese and the Marathas: the Second Phase (1737—39)

When in January 1732 Saldanha da Gama the Portuguese Viceroy at Goa went home his place was taken by Conde de Sandomil. Shortly after his arrival at Goa, he began a policy of aggression against the Sawant of Wadi and of persecution against the Hindus. His example was faithfully followed by his subordinates, throughout the Portuguese dominions.[52] He began to build a strong fort at Thana in 1734. By this time the domestic feuds of the Angres came to a head, and at first Manaji and then Sambhaji were constrained to appeal for the Portuguese help. When an agreement was effected between Manaji and Sambhaji by the mediation of the Peshwa, another was formed between the Peshwa and the Portuguese. The latter agreement contained a clause that the Portuguese should allow the Marathas to establish a factory on the Salsette Island, and that its site should be selected by the General of the North. Unfortunately at this time the General happened to be one Louis

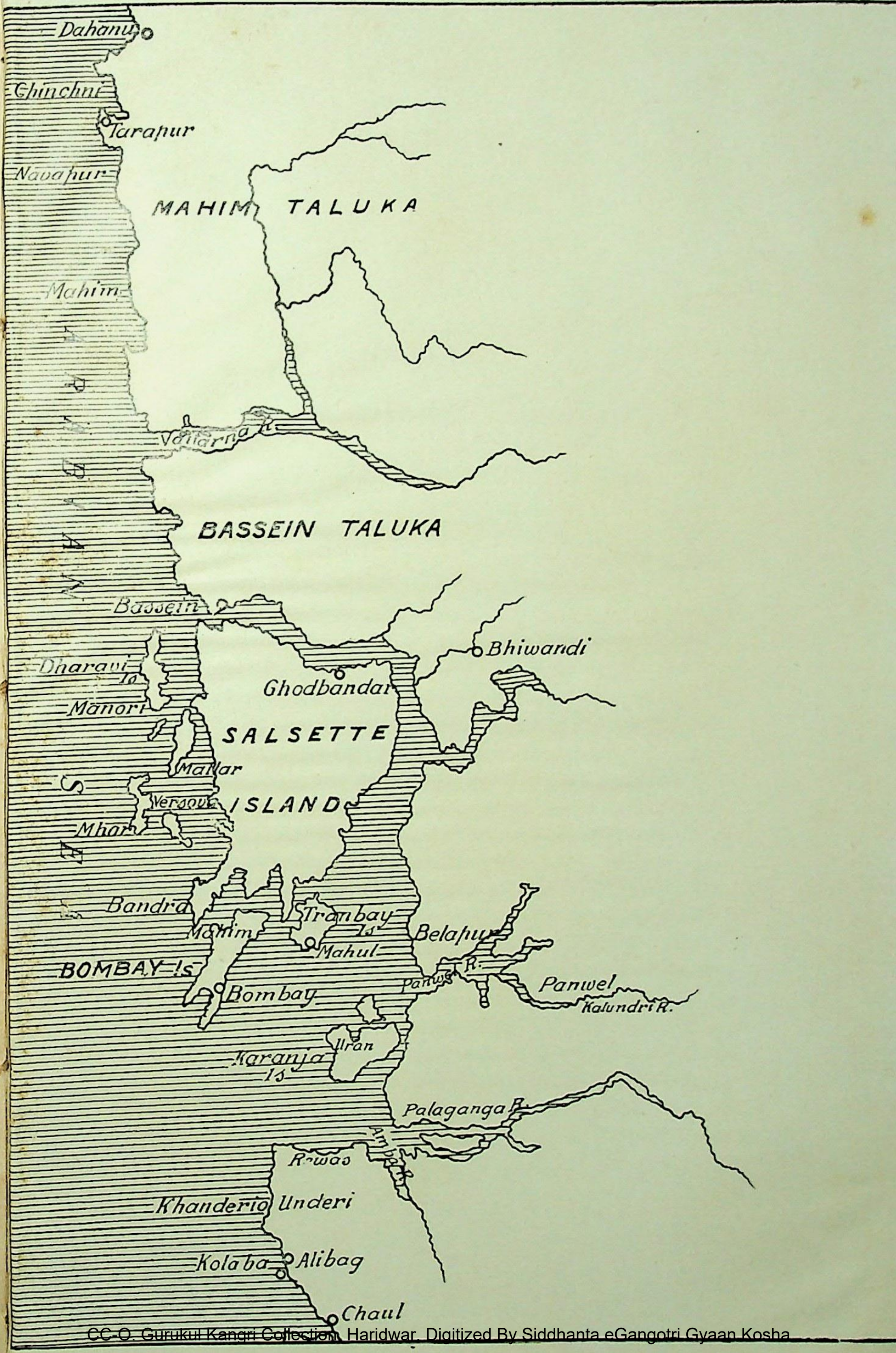
[51] Even before this, hostilities had commenced between the Marathas and the Portuguese. As early as 1724 Ram Chandra Pant, governor of Kalyan, and Pilaji Jadhav invaded Portuguese territories with the object of exacting Sardeshmukhi. In 1725 the Portuguese retorted by attacking Kalyan.—(Conde de Ericeira—Noticia da India—fundo Geral No. 463—Archivo Ultramarino da Lisbon).

[52] *Life of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*), pp. 62—67.

Botelho, the Viceroy's nephew, a hot-headed youth, who had a knack of quarrelling with every one. When he was asked to select a site he flatly refused, and on the arrival of Vyankat Rao Joshi, Baji Rao's brother-in-law and envoy, with the demand for the site he lost his temper and forgot the common courtesy, not to speak of diplomatic decorum and called to his face fair and handsome Baji Rao a negro. This was an insult, which would incense any man, and Baji Rao infuriated, resolved on speedy revenge, and made a vigorous preparation with the greatest secrecy and swiftness. The outbreak of hostilities comprised a series of operations conducted in a number of islands—outposts and fortresses, strewn about the coast. To follow clearly, a brief description of those places is necessary. As one sails northward by the coast from Kolaba and Khanderi, the first considerable island is that of Bombay. Due east of Bombay lies Karanja and to the north of Karanja, Gharapuri and Turambe or Trombay islets. North of Bombay is the island of Vandra or Bandra and as one leaves Vandra rises the fortified island of Salsette or Sasti with a dependency of 66 villages. "At the mouth of Panvel creek stood the town of Belapur. Nearer Thana were Anjur and Kelve. These last were inhabited chiefly by Pathare Prabhus, who had had religious quarrels with the Portuguese and had appealed to Baji Rao. To the east of Bhandra was the strong place of Marol. Off the coast between Andheri and Bassein was a row of islands. To the west of Goregaon was the fort of Vesava, called by the Portuguese Versova. Beyond Versova again was Malad, of which the inamdars Antaji Raghunath and Ramchandra Raghunath were in secret correspondence with Baji Rao. Near Bassein was the fortified island Dharavi. On the opposite bank to Bassein but a little further up stream was the fort of Ghorbandar, which guarded the southern mouth of Uhlas river. Beyond Bassein was the fort of Tarapur and the towns and talukas of Mahim, Dahanu, and Ambargaon. On the shore near Bassein was the fort of Arnala. To the north-east were Manora and Asheri."[53] All the fortifications and outposts were dwindling to decay ; and Bassein only had been repaired and strengthened.

53 Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, pp. 251-52.

The storm broke on the head of the arrogant commander of the North early in 1737, and he was not at all prepared for it. In consultation with Gangaji Naik, Bapuji Shripat and Basudeo Joshi, Baji Rao determined to open the campaign in the hot weather of 1737. Anxious to maintain strict secrecy he mustered his army on the occasion of goddess Bhawani's worship at Poona, when vast crowds congregated there, and nobody could suspect the special gathering of the troops. Then he made a careful disposition of the army, appointing Shankaraji Pant to the chief command, Gangaji Naik to the army against Bassein, and Khandoji Mankar to the army against Salsette. Further Ramchandra Hari Patwardhan and Khandoji Mankar were ordered to collect an army of one thousand at Kalyan. It was reinforced by the junction of three other commanders—Antaji Raghunath, Narain and Ramchandra Joshi—with their own troops. While these armies were gathering on the frontiers, the Portuguese commander of the North remained entirely ignorant, and when he was warned by the English Governor John Horne he returned a haughty reply " that when the barbarians came, he would know how to receive them." But the barbarians did not await his reception. Antaji Raghunath, Narain and Ramchandra Joshi, along with a host of other Maratha leaders, who had been sent in advance made a dash into the half-finished fort of Thana on the night of 6th April, 1737. Chimnaji Appa who was coming behind them heard the boom of their guns at Badlapur, and hurried to the spot for assistance. When he arrived there he found his advanced army had swept off the Portuguese from their defences and captured the fort. Many Portuguese died fighting bravely, and when the daylight broke the Maratha banner was seen flying on the fort. The first battlement that the Marathas had captured in their attack was named " Fatteh Buruj " or the Tower of Victory. Next Chimnaji entered Salsette with Shankaraji Keshav, Moroji Sindhia, Chimnaji Bhiu Rao and other leaders of the army. Narain Joshi stormed the fort of Parasik and invested the fort of Belapur. The island of Dharavi was soon conquered and then they advanced on the fort of Arnala at the mouth of the Vaitarani, which was taken by Chimnaji Bhiu Rao, Gangaji Naik and Shankaraji Keshav. Now they determined to attack Bassein. Already in the previous year the contiguous places of


Dahanu
Chinchni
Tarapur
Navapur
MAHIM TALUKA
Mahim
Vaitarna R.
BASSEIN TALUKA
Bassein
Bhiwandi
Dharavi Is
Ghodbandar
Manori
SALSETTE
Mallar
Versova
ISLAND
Mhar
Bandra
Trombay Is
Mahim
Belapur
Mahul
BOMBAY Is
Panwel R.
Bombay
Panwel
Kalundri R.
Uran
Karanja Is
Palaganga R.
Amba R.
Rewas
Khanderi
Underi
Kolaba
Alibag
Chaul

Tandulwadi, Takmak, Wesave, Kaldurga, Manor and Belapur had fallen into the hands of the Marathas. The Marathas could have easily conquered Bassein if they had immediately advanced on it for the Portuguese affairs there, were in a very disorderly condition at that time. But they delayed in their anxiety to ascertain the internal condition of Bassein and in discussing the plans for its occupation. Before they could decide on a plan of operation, set in the rainy season, and the campaign had to be closed. Chimnaji left Shankaraji Pant, Moroji and Gangaji Naik to keep an eye on Bassein; appointed Khandoji Mankar and Ramaji Pant to Thana ; Narain Joshi to Belapur and Vithal Pant to Manor ; and returned to Poona on the 1st of July, 1737. During the rainy season Shankaraji Pant and Gangaji Naik made an attempt to scale the walls of Bassein in co-operation with a strong reinforcement sent from Poona, under Baji Bhiu Rao and Ramchandra Hari, but they failed to make any impression ; for in the meantime the Viceroy had substituted Antonio Condim Foes for Louis Botelho, and his arrival at Bassein had revived the spirit of the Portuguese. For some time the campaign had to be left in abeyance owing to Baji Rao's departure for Hindustan. But in the meanwhile the officers of the Peshwa were not idle. It is said, some of them entered the fort of Bassein in disguise and ascertained the vulnerable points of it. This knowledge stood them in good stead when the campaign was resumed next cold weather.[54]

Fall of Bassein ; Treaty Between the Marathas and the Portuguese

The second phase opened not before November of the next year, i.e., 1738, though intermittent fighting was going on between the parties, all the while. It found both the Marathas and the Portuguese well-prepared to test each other's might. The Portuguese had received substantial armed help from Home and they had signalised their increased strength by relieving Mahim, several miles to the north of Bassein, and Asherin, which had been reduced to the greatest straits on account of the close investment of the Marathas. They further planned to recapture Thana in September 1738 by a surprise attack but failed owing to the timely warning of the Bombay Governor to

54 *Chronicle of the Peshwas* (*Marathi*), pp. 28-29.

the Marathas to keep ready against a Portuguese attack. The one standing complaint of the Portuguese commander of the North was that the English Governor John Horne, while pleading neutrality had refused help to the Portuguese, sold ammunition to the Marathas and sent British gunners to serve under them. The Marathas too had practically done with the affairs of the North and Baji Rao was back at Poona to focus his activities on the reduction of the Portuguese. With the approach of the fair season, Chimnaji was appointed the generalissimo of the whole army and started at the head of a fine army about November 1738. He flooded the whole country from Daman to Diu with his troops, and set up strong outposts at important points. He went about supervising and directing in person the operation everywhere. His plan was a general attack on the Portuguese possessions strewn about the coast, and to cut off all supplies reaching them from outside. Had he succeeded in carrying out this scheme the campaign would have been over in less than the time he actually took for its completion. The delay was due to the change of governor at Bombay. John Horne's successor Stephen Law stopped all help to the Marathas and supplied the Portuguese with provisions by sea. Chimnaji took some time to make the required dispositions of the army, and to post them at proper places. Early in January 1739, his arrangements were complete, and a wholesale engagement was ordered in the second week. Mahim fell after a spirited defence and so also Tarapur in January. Kelve, Shivgaon, Dahanu, Nargol, Khatalvad and Asheri followed suit. Almost simultaneously an advance on Goa was ordered and Vyankat Rao Ghorpade invaded the territory on January 23rd, at the head of a powerful force of twelve thousand horse and four thousand foot.[55] In two days he had taken Margoa in the neighbourhood, and had besieged the fort of Rachol, key to Goa. The governor, Count Sandomil was hard put to it to save the capital. As the waves of Marathas attacked with a furious might, the defences were shaken to their foundation. Driven to despair, the Portuguese stood rooted to their post, and with admirable fortitude repulsed the attacks. The governor ordered conscription and even monks were yoked to

[55] *Correspondence of Brahmendra Swami* (*Marathi*), by Parasnis, Letter No. 119.

military service. In February 1739 they succeeded in rolling back a vigorous attack of the Marathas, but in view of the general situation of affairs it was clear that they could not long continue their defence. Alarming news poured in from all quarters. Versova and Karanja had surrendered, and Bandra had been abandoned. Bassein was subjected to a close and vigorous siege. But for the provisions sent by Stephen Law it would have long before surrendered to the Marathas. Dismal tidings of the death of its valiant commandant Silveira on the 15th April, reached the Viceroy at a depressing moment, and though De Souza Pereira was ordered to succeed him, yet its fall appeared only too imminent. The last charge of the Marathas on Bassein and the admirable defence of the Portuguese demand a meed of praise for their wonderful heroism. Its graphic description by Kincaid is well worth quoting here. "Their (Maratha) army according to Portuguese accounts, now numbered two hundred thousand men ; and by the 13th May, 1739, they had after repeated failures succeeded in mining of Nossa Senhora dos Remedios. At 7 a.m. on the 13th May the explosion of two mines partially destroyed the bastion. The Marathas rushed to the attack, but were driven back by the valour of the garrison, and the explosion of a third mine caused them heavy losses. Throughout the day the Maratha leaders Chimnaji Appa, Manaji Angre, Malhar Rao Holkar, Ranoji Sindhia vied with each other in trying to scale the walls of the doomed city. They delivered no less than eleven assaults on the tower of San Sebastian and six others on that of Nossa Senhora dos Remedios. The Portuguese repulsed them with hand grenades and musketry fire. During the night the besieged made a curtain of lighted firewood inside the latter tower and barricaded the breaches in the tower of San Sebastian, with broken doors and disused hencoops. On the 14th May the explosion of a fourth mine laid the tower of San Sebastian level with the ground. The Marathas established themselves in the ruins of the masonry and enfiladed the garrison. All day the Portuguese defended themselves with the courage of despair. In the evening a Maratha envoy bearing a white flag told Pereira that in the morning three fresh mines would be fired, the town carried and the Christian population put to the sword. Pereira called a council of war. The officers reported that the troops

were exhausted and unfit any longer to man the walls. No succours could be expected from Goa ; and Pereira decided to make terms while this was still possible. In the hour of victory the Marathas showed commendable generosity. They allowed the garrison eight days in which to leave Bassein with the honours of war."[56] Indeed their generosity was as commendable as their skill and courage displayed in the siege. Never before or after did the Marathas display "such extraordinary vigour, skill and perseverance." And Chimnaji rightly thinks it unparalleled in the history of the Marathas. An honourable peace closed the war and the following were the terms :

(i) The Marathas should allow the Portuguese to march out of the fort in safety, with their colours flying and band playing.

(ii) The Hindu, Christian or Muslim families, that wanted to leave Bassein with their belongings should be allowed to depart in peace.

(iii) The Portuguese warships should be allowed to leave the port of Bassein in safety, with their guns and ammunition.

(iv) If in conveying the Hindu, Christian or Muslim families from Bassein, more transport ships are required, they should be supplied by the Marathas and should be allowed to reach their destination without being molested by Angre.

(v) The Christian fathers should be allowed to depart in peace with all their belongings.

(vi) Those who elected to remain in Bassein should be allowed to perform their religious practices without any trouble.

(vii) The prisoners of war taken on both sides should be restored to each other.

(viii) The Marathas should withdraw to a distance and should not enter the fort before the Portuguese went beyond the ranges of their guns.

(ix) The three Portuguese churches in Bassein should not be in any way injured.

[56] Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, pp. 257-58. For a Maratha account of the siege refer Appendix to this chapter.

(x) Till the ratification of the treaty an envoy of the Portuguese should remain with the Marathas, and *vice versa*.

These were some of the most important terms of the treaty and be it said to the credit of the Marathas that " they faithfully observed all the conditions of the capitulation."[57]

In the meanwhile the siege of Goa was dragging on, and Vyankat Rao was taking one after another of the outworks of the city. At last he sent a threatening message to the governor that if he did not submit, the city would be blown off when the army operating at Bassein marched on it after its fall. At the time Bassein was nearing its capitulation, and therefore the governor thought it expedient to close the war, when he could honourably do it. On the 27th April, 1739, a peace was concluded between Vyankat Rao and the governor by which the districts of Salsette and Bardes were to be evacuated by the Marathas, and the Portuguese undertook in return to pay as indemnity one million and six hundred thousand Xerafins in three instalments, besides an annual tribute of forty thousand Xerafins called 40 per cent of the royal revenue.[58]

Results of the Portuguese War

Thus closed the war with the Portuguese whose ruin was now complete on the west coast. In all they had lost to the Marathas a territory 75 miles long, containing 340 villages besides 8 towns, 20 ports, and the two important points of Thana and Bassein. The island of Salsette, too was a very valuable acquisition for the Marathas because the paddy crop grew in abundance on it and salt was manufactured on a very large scale. A little later they ceded Chaul to the Marathas. By the beginning of 1740 nothing but Daman and a few districts round about remained to the Portuguese. Nor was their loss confined to the territories alone. They had spent a huge amount of money on the war, and had surrendered a number of guns and ships. In fact the Portuguese power was now entirely broken. On the west coast there were left two powers

57 *History of the Portuguese*, by Danvers, Vol. II, p. 412.

58 *Ralacao dos Successos Acontecidos no Estads de India Archivo Ultramarino, Fundo Geral* No. 929.

now, the Marathas and the English. Of these the English were yet insignificant, but their control of the sea gave them a prestige disproportionate to their acquisitions on land. The power of the Marathas however had risen beyond all comprehension. They had worsted the Sidi, and almost annihilated the Portuguese on the western coast.

The Marathas and the English after the Fall of Bassein

The destruction of the Portuguese awakened the English to a sense of danger. Solicitous of winning good will of the Peshwa they sent two embassies—one to him, and the other to Shahu. Captain Inchbird started for Bassein to the Peshwa, and Captain Gordon for Satara to Shahu on the same day—12th May, 1739. Captain Inchbird met Chimnaji Appa, who showed a cold shoulder to him from the beginning, and his embassy proved abortive. Captain Gordon however met with better success. On his arrival at Satara he found the king out on the expedition to Miraj. He continued his journey and reached the camp on the 1st of June. He interviewed the Pratinidhi on the 3rd, and met the king on the 8th while still in camp. Shahu received the news that Nadir Shah intended to invade Maharastra. The king was upset and for some days could not regain the composure of mind. Perforce the English envoy was unable to transact his business. By the 14th, positive news about the departure of Nadir Shah reached the king and on the 19th came Vyankat Rao with the pleasing message that the Portuguese had been humiliated. Cheered by the news the king gave a cordial welcome to the envoy, sent friendly greetings to the Governor at Bombay and directed him to Baji Rao whom he wrote to conclude a friendly alliance with the English. The Peshwa obeyed the orders and concluded an alliance by which he granted free trade to the English Company throughout his dominions. On the 30th June Gordon left for Bombay.

Thus by June 1739 the Peshwa was supreme not only in the North, but in the Konkan. This year marks the apogee of his career. He had completed the groundwork for the foundation of an empire. To his son was left the task of extending the Maratha dominions furthermore, and plant the banner of the Marathas on the walls of Attock.

APPENDIX

Letter Written by Chimnaji dated 13th May, 1739, Describing the Siege and Conquest of Bassein by Him.

To Shrimant Maharaj Shri Paramahansa Baba,

Child Chimnaji with many respects begs to intimate as follows: Through the blessings of Your Worship (स्वामी) we are all well here at Bassein till Vaisakha Vadya 1. To enter into particulars:—Relying upon Your Worship's assurance of security we directed our batteries against Bassein on the 10th of the bright half of Magh. Since that date we kept our batteries active all along and we also built four or five mounds (for raised batteries). We exploded mines; and tried all the means by which the place could be captured. The Firangis also employed all the devices which were in ancient times used by the great and powerful gods; accordingly they threw bombs on our mines and our raised batteries, and shattered the mines to pieces. They poured forth water by constructing channels, let loose burning faggots of wood and managed to keep them in flames by pouring oil, gun-powder and resin over them. The musket-firing and the cannonade of the Firangi was (skilful) beyond measure. But the blessing and the staff (of a सन्यासिन्) of Your Worship was the powerful weapon in our possession. By its prowess cannon from our side fired effectively and silenced the artillery of the Firangis. The terrace over the battlements was razed to the ground. Bassein was an inaccessible and impregnable place where (ordinarily) mines could be of no use. But by the prowess of Your Worship's benign look we constructed mines, conducted them under the shelter of a ceiling of wooden planks covered over with sand two or two and half cubits deep, and supported by pillars on both sides, made space for placing barrels of the mines by causing large boulders to be shattered by employing two hundred stone-choppers; and having thus made every arrangement complete on Vaisakha Shuddha 5, we allotted sides to the men in charge of mines,

fixed upon drum-beating as the signal, resolved that as soon as the mines were exploded all should rise for a *coup de main* and should climb the bastion, climb by placing ladders ; and then on the morning of Vaisakha Shuddha 6 about an hour after sunrise set fire to the mines. Some mines on the left side exploded ; but while some of them had not yet burst people with rash impatience rushed on the battlement ; just then the other mines on the same side burst and the people were pressed down, injured or killed by the explosion. The mines on the right side exploded in the same manner ; when one or two burst, the people clambered seeing that a passage to the bastion had opened up ; just then the other mines exploded and the men who had climbed to the top were blown up. The people then shrank back. They became disheartened and work was at a standstill. The Firangis having mustered their forces bombarded us with bombs, explosives and pieces of stones with the utmost (ferocity). Thereupon the army men and the attendants had lost all their courage. One big mine on the right side, within Malharji Holkar's purview had yet remained unexploded. It was then searched ; barrels (of powder) were added to it ; the train of powder reaching that mine was repaired and men were chosen (for attack). And having resolved that flags should be advanced immediately after the mine had exploded we set fire to the mine on the right side on Vaisakha Shuddha 7. The men advanced at once and clambered upon the bastion which was half blown away. The Firangis raised a palisade at the inner end of the terrace, filled their trunks (with powder, bombs, etc.), led their guns to a proper position and then having mustered their forces they set fire to sackloads of powder and projected bombs, explosives and pieces of stones with indescribable ferocity. They showered fire over our people and roasted them as it were. Nevertheless our men had the adamantine armours in the form of Your Worship's blessings, on their bodies. Regardless of fire on account of that (armour) our men fought in an excellent manner. The Firangis fought with genuine valour and exhibited true soldierly spirit. Men on our side also fought like heroes of the Bharata War. Many wars have been waged in the past but this war has never had its equal. Everything was due to Your Worship's blessings. Our men could not be ousted from the bastion. Thereupon beaten by

the blows of Your Worship's staff, the Firangis came to terms on the morning of Ashtami. The terms were accepted. They agreed to vacate the fort completely with their families within eight days. We, therefore, stopped our cannonade. The Firangis removed their families and all their baggage to ships. Yesterday, on the 15th of Vaisakha, the Firangis vacated the place completely. The place was won by the efficacy of Your Worship's merit. The total casualties amongst our army, men and attendants, comprising persons that were blown up by mines and those that were killed and injured would amount to five thousand or even more. On the side of the Firangis also, seven or eight hundred were killed and many were wounded in addition. This was a fight comparable with the Bharata War. The situation of Bassein was very strong—bounded by the sea on the west, by a creek on the south, and by marshy land open to the inroads of the sea on the east ; thus no attempt could be done on these three sides. Only the northern side was accessible. Even there the ground was not firm on account of sand. Your Worship is verily a portion of the Godhead incarnate. It was Your Worship who gave Bassein to us. How could your assurance, thrice repeated, turn out to be false? Otherwise, the task of (taking) Bassein was not a thing possible for human beings. Bassein was won through the blessings of Your Worship. The Sudarshan wheel of God hit like a stroke of thunderbolt on the devoted head of the hater of Religion, and the Topikars succumbed. Otherwise, Bassein was Bassein and the Firangi was as it were a bundle of fire. The prowess of Your Worship is unbounded. Only Your Worship knows Your Worship's greatness. What can we human beings know? Your Worship had ordered me to send 125 *putlis* as soon as Bassein was won and had intimated that a diadem costing Rs. 125 was put on the image of Shri Bhuleshwar. Hence, according to Your Worship's orders I have sent with Shrinivas Kedar 125 *putlis* and 125 rupees, these latter being the cost of the diadem of Shri Bhuleshwar, for Your Worship's acceptance. They will reach (you) (in time). We are the progeny of Your Worship. Your Worship possesses the power to dispense favour over us in every way. What other deity have we got besides Your Worship? In short, this work has been achieved through the blessings and through the prowess of the staff of

Your Worship. We make no pretence of being able to describe the greatness of Your Worship. Shrinivas Kedar, carrying the *putlis* and rupees, has been despatched and will reach there soon. This letter is sent ahead of him in order that Your Worship may learn the news sooner. I beg to inform that I am at your behest.

CHAPTER VIII

END OF BAJI RAO—REVIEW OF HIS WORK

BAJI RAO'S CAREER COMING TO A CLOSE

BAJI RAO'S work of conquest was now coming to a close. In 1738 he forced the Nizam to resign the whole country between the Chambal and the Narmada, and thus made his authority supreme there ; in 1739 his devoted brother Chimnaji Appa bore down the last barrier to his absolute sway in the Konkan. At home the opponents had been silenced, and had submitted to the inevitable ascendancy of the Peshwa. Indeed his great abilities had borne fruit after a strenuous struggle for very near fifteen years. His conquests had been done ; the consolidation work was yet to begin. Peshwa's authority in Gujrat, Malwa and Bundelkhand had been recognized ; but his government had yet to be established. Maratha expansion had been secured, but not the Maratha sway. Whether Baji Rao was looking forward to consolidate what he had conquered or to extend his conquests further, there is no means of knowing. Unfortunately he did not live long, and his brilliant career was cut short after a year. Hence tantalising as it is we are left in the dark to imagine what he actually meant to do after these vast conquests.

HIS ACTIVITIES BETWEEN 1738 AND 1739

After the treaty of Durai-Sarai Baji Rao remained for some time in Malwa, ordering the affairs in that side. On the commencement of the rains, he returned to Poona, where he arrived in July 1738. After the rains his brother Chimnaji was deputed against the Portuguese, and all was over with them by May 1739. Chimnaji came back to Poona in September. In the meanwhile Baji Rao was in Khandesh, watching closely the movements of Nadir Shah. Nadir Shah, the Emperor of Persia had swept through Kabul and Punjab like a hurricane,

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and had entered Delhi in February 1739. The woeful fate of the proud imperial city, and the utter devastation of the country through which he passed, came as a warning to Baji Rao, and he did not move beyond Khandesh. There was further a rumour that Nadir Shah wanted to chastise the Marathas, and contemplated an invasion of their country. This rumour threw Shahu into a state of consternation, but Baji Rao remained unmoved. He indeed made vigorous preparation to that end, and so vast were his resources that at a time when the campaign against the Portuguese was in full swing, he hoped to get together about seventy to eighty thousand troops. But before long Nadir Shah left Delhi, and he was free from the anxiety. He was destined, however, to spend the rest of his days in trouble.

Baji Rao's Last Days

The glorious career of the great Peshwa is invested with a tragic charm towards its close. Brave as he was, he was no less romantic. He was passionately attached to a Muhammadan mistress, Mastani. Besides being a peerless beauty, she was clever and highly accomplished. Well-practised in all the martial exercises she rode admirably well. She accompanied Baji Rao in all his expeditions, and they were so fond of each other that she would ride stirrup to stirrup alongside Baji Rao, and keep his company in the most arduous campaigns. Baji Rao's infatuation for her led to the neglect of his own wife Kashi Bai, herself an accomplished and beautiful lady. This was not to be brooked in Hindu society, however great or powerful the Peshwa might be. His son Balaji and his brother Chimnaji at last interfered, and pressed him to renounce all attachment towards Mastani. They further brought the influence of other Maratha chiefs to bear on him. In a fit of depression Baji Rao left Poona, and went to live at Patas all alone in November 1739. After his departure they seized Mastani, and kept her in confinement in a portion of Peshwa's palace called Shanwarwada. But Mastani was not prepared to resign her influence without a struggle.[1] On the 24th November she outwitted her captors and made her escape to Baji Rao. But close on her heels followed Chimnaji, Purandare, and others,

[1] *Chronicle of the Peshwas (Marathi)*, by Sohni, pp. 24—26.

and brought her back to Poona. It was too much for Baji Rao, and unable to bear the pangs of separation from her, he resolved to drown them in the din and blood of battle.

One of the conditions of the treaty of Mungi-Shegaon was that the Nizam should give a personal jagir to the Peshwa. This he had not yet fulfilled. Now when the Nizam was at Delhi, Baji Rao determined to attack Nasir Jang his son and deputy, and to force him to cede the promised jagir. Thus resolved, he started on the 12th December, 1739. Chimnaji joined him on the way at the head of a strong army. As the brothers entered the Nizam's dominions, Nasir Jang came with forty thousand troops, and met them on the banks of the Godavari. For full two months skirmishes were going on, without a single decisive battle. At last Nasir Jang was forced to retire to Aurangabad, and to take shelter in the fort. Baji Rao pursued him there and closely besieged him. He at length negotiated for peace and got it on the condition of granting the promised jagirs—the districts of Handia and Khargaon, south of Indore.[2] Thus the campaign was successful and the Peshwa gained his ends. But it is not known where Mastani was or what she was doing at the time.

Baji Rao's Death

At the close of the campaign Baji Rao sent away Chimnaji to Poona, and himself started northwards to take possession of his newly acquired jagirs. From Poona Chimnaji was called away to Kolaba, along with Nana Saheb, Baji Rao's son, to arbitrate in the quarrel between Sambhaji Angre and Manaji Angre. All went on as usual for some time. Baji Rao was touring through his jagirs in order to gain all possible information about them, when at Raver on the banks of the Narmada he was suddenly taken ill. A violent fever, lasting only a few days, shook him to his nerves, and unable to resist its shock, he expired on the 28th April, 1740.[3] He died comparatively young, and the twenty years of his rule were a period of ceaseless activities, of wars and conquests. Exhausted by

2 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 86.
3 *Chronicle of the Peshwas (Marathi)*, by Sohni, pp. 39-40.

exertions, broken in health, and disappointed in his unquenchable passion for Mastani, he passed away at the age of forty-two in the presence of his younger son Janardan Pant, and his devoted and forgiving wife Kashi Bai. Thus died one of the greatest of the Peshwas, one of the towering personalities of Maratha history. In due time the news reached Chimnaji and Nana Saheb at Kolaba, and they went through the prescribed rites there. Next they came to Poona, where they learnt that the funeral ceremonies had been properly performed, and that Mastani had become *Sati* or immolated herself on the funeral pyre. "Separated from her lover in this world, she passed fearlessly through the flames to greet him in the next."[4] This Mastani, so loyal to her lover, so accomplished, and so charming, was, it is alleged, the daughter of Raja Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand by a Muhammadan mistress. She was given to Baji Rao as a result of his help to Chhatrasal. Bravest of the brave, fairest of the fair, Baji Rao died like a most fascinating figure in a romance of love.

Baji Rao's Sons

Baji Rao left three sons, of whom the eldest Nana Saheb succeeded to his office, and Raghunath Rao rose to notoriety in later history. His third son was by Mastani and bore the name of Samsher Bahadur. Baji Rao gave sumptuous jagirs to Mastani, and tried his best to get Mastani's son recognised as a Hindu Brahmin. That claim could not be conceded by the Hindu society though Baji Rao did all in his power to raise the prestige of the Marathas, and Mastani immolated herself like a Hindu wife on the funeral pyre of Baji Rao. Samsher Bahadur died at Panipat in 1761, and his only son lived to perpetuate his line, as the Nawab of Banda.

Baji Rao's Character

Despite his great talents as a soldier and a leader of men, Baji Rao lacked some of the sterling qualities of a statesman. He was domineering in his attitude towards others and overbearing in his manners. He was a soldier to the core, and

[4] Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, p. 266.

could never bear opposition. Fortunately he possessed resourcefulness in plenty, and therefore he could bear down all opposition. It is said that he had the head to plan and the hand to execute. True, but too much masterfulness cuts at the root of statesmanship. A little elasticity of temper adds salt to statecraft. Hence Baji Rao made many enemies in his lifetime, and left as many behind. He did not know how to conciliate. He knew how to domineer. But domination even when dictated by absolutely selfless or disinterested motives antagonises people more often than we suppose ; and Baji Rao's domination was not disinterested. There is no gainsaying the fact that he was deeply imbued with a spirit of selfishness though he was also deeply loyal to his chief Shahu and to the cause of his country. He firmly believed that all he did, was for the good of Maharastra and that his lead was not only desirable but indispensable. Naturally he gave offence to many by such an attitude as this. At the beginning of his regime he met with many an opposition, and as he succeeded in bearing them down one after another he gained greater self-confidence. His brilliant victories made him a terror to his enemies and a trustworthy friend to Shahu. His attitude towards the Maratha confederacy was stern and unrelenting. He wanted that its members should work in harmony, under the guidance of the Peshwas. He would not let them go their own way and would not brook any other's authority than his. Thus actuated he incurred the jealousy and hostility of many of the prominent members of the confederacy. The Pratinidhi, Dabhade, Raghoji Bhonsla, Fatteh Singh Bhonsla, and Angre—all these nourished a grudge against Baji Rao because he was both ambitious and domineering. He tried to suppress the same faults in others and therefore incurred the implacable hatred of others. Had he been a little more conciliating and considerate he would have won over many of those, who became his avowed enemies. To estimate his work we have to look at it from two points of view :—

(i) his attitude towards the Maratha confederacy, (ii) his policy of Maratha expansion.

Estimate of Baji Rao's Work : (i) His Attitude towards the Maratha Confederacy

His attitude towards the Maratha confederacy was one

of pure domination. He desired that the members of the confederacy should be guided by the Peshwa. Their internal relations and relations with the foreign powers should be subject to his scrutiny and control. In other words the home and foreign policy of the Marathas ought to be regulated by the central authority, viz., the Peshwa. They should not make war or peace without his sanction. They should not aggrandize on their own account. With regard to the internal relations of the members of the confederacy, the Peshwa posed himself as the grand arbiter and was eager to interfere in their affairs, often to the prejudice of their interests and to the furtherance of his own. A case in point is the family strife of the Angres. In his dealings with the Dabhade and Pratinidhi, the conviction had been driven home to his heart that one-man rule was much better for the peace and prosperity of the kingdom than the rule of many. Hence when he wanted to dazzle the people of Maharastra by the brilliant victories and conquests of the Mughal dominions, his real intention was to utilize the enormous popular esteem and moral prestige, thus gained in bearing down all opposition of his adversaries. He was actuated by a deep love of conquest, and his foreign conquests were also meant to include the conquest of the Maratha confederacy. Not that he wanted actually to rule over all Maharastra, but that he wanted he should domineer over it. All the members of the confederacy should acknowledge his superiority. At the outset he clearly defined his foreign policy of extending the Maratha sway over the Mughal dominions. He had thought he would be able to divert the attention of the Marathas from their domestic squabbles to united action, in order to win the empire of Hindustan. But when he had launched his scheme, he realized how futile are the human expectations. Instead of co-operating with him they tried to hamper him. In Malwa and Bundelkhand it was Baji Rao's own army that fought and won victories, and it simply whetted the jealousy of his opponents. On the eve of the battle of Sironj or Bhopal, the Dabhade and Raghoji Bhonsla never made a move to guard the passage across the Narmada so that reinforcement might not reach the Nizam from his son Nasir Jang. The Pratinidhi, after the repeated failures of his schemes, bore a sullen resentment towards him. The Dabhade remained implacable in his enmity owing to the

disaster at Dabhai. Raghoji Bhonsla far away from Poona and Satara, and therefore out of his easy reach, chose to go his own way and tried to emulate the Peshwa, and aggrandize on his own account. Therefore what actually happened was that, Baji Rao who failed to attract the sympathy and co-operation of the old members of the confederacy, strove to conquer countries on his own account, and brought to bear the pressure and prestige of his brilliant conquests on home politics. Not that his vast conquests in any way enhanced his resources, with which he cowed down the hostile members of the confederacy. Far from it, he was on the other hand head and ears in debt to various persons. But his only gain was that every one quailed before his war-hardened veterans, who swept off even the Portuguese and the Sidis in their onslaught. Therefore the Dabhade, the Pratinidhi and Sambhaji never dared defy his power. That was the reaction of his foreign policy on home politics.

It quieted the dissensions no doubt, but it created a deep resentment against the domination of Baji Rao. But Baji Rao alone is not to blame for it. He had done for the confederacy what lay in his power. If the whole of the confederacy had submitted to his lead and co-operated with him, the divisions would have been automatically made up. Baji Rao's conquests would have been far wider and perhaps easier than what they actually were. And instead of Baji Rao's own creatures—Sindhia, Holkar, Govind Pant and Pawar, sharing those conquests, all would have shared them, and there would have been less discontent. Baji Rao has been blamed for his aggressive attitude towards the confederacy that he did not conciliate the various members. True, he did not. But put under those circumstances could he possibly do so? From 1720 to 1725 was a period of trial, when Shahu looked upon him with suspicion ; from 1726 to 1731 was a period when the implacable enmity of his opponents dogged him everywhere to bring about his utter ruin ; and from 1732 to 1737 was a period in which he embarked on his scheme of Maratha expansion, and which was crowded with events. During these years the conviction was driven home to his heart that he could never expect sympathy and co-operation from his colleagues—the Pratinidhi, and others. He did not like to waste time in fruitlessly trying

to humour them. With regard to the Pratinidhi, he never tried to ruin him, even though the Pratinidhi had played into the hands of the Nizam. If he killed Trimbak Rao, it was the result of a painful necessity, and at the end he tamely submitted to the decision of Shahu. He fell at the feet of Uma Bai to beg her forgiveness. He never molested Raghoji Bhonsla in any way. But yet every one of them was an avowed enemy to him ; not because he had done any wrong to them but because his transcendant qualities, the unshakable confidence of Shahu in him and the brilliant result of his bold foreign policy were an eyesore to them. It inflamed their jealousy, and jealousy is always the sign of the weak. Naturally when Baji Rao found, he could not unite the Marathas in a common cause, and the chiefs wanted to have their own way, make war and aggrandize on their own account, he apprehended danger to the state, to the whole of Maratha confederacy. The conditions prevailing in 1712—15, were likely to obtain once more on a magnified scale. Therefore he determined upon repression, wanted to impose his own domination on the Maratha confederacy, wanted to have one-man rule. Impelled by this idea he began with the western coast, and created his own adherents in Malwa and Bundelkhand. He succeeded in completely disarming the Pratinidhi and the Angres. The Dabhades were no match for him but he had yet to reckon with Raghoji. In this he had the full support of his master. Though Shahu never liked departure from the old order, and acted on the principle of "create nothing new, destroy nothing old" yet he was not opposed to keep the turbulent Maratha chiefs under the firm control of his chief minister whose loyalty he never doubted at all. What he wanted was that the Maratha chieftains like Angre, Dabhade, Bhonsla or Pratinidhi should not be wiped out of existence. Neither was Baji Rao disposed to destroy them. What Baji Rao wanted was to keep them under his control and merge their individual interests in those of the confederacy. He knew he would be the best promoter of the wider interests of the united Maharastra. But here all looked upon him with suspicion. The Peshwa's own proceedings too were not free from a colouring of selfishness. That he wanted to concentrate all power in his own hands, is beyond doubt. But on the whole, when we take note of all the circumstances—the imbecility of Shahu, the

mutual jealousy and rancour of the chieftains, their self-centred interests, and unpardonable incapacity for shouldering the burden of the state, we are driven to the conclusion that, even the concentration of power in the hands of the Peshwa was for the good of the Maratha confederacy. And Baji Rao was up to it, but Fates had conspired against him. His life was cut short in the mid-career of his glory. He died when many a great man begin their career. He could not carry out his policy of domination to a successful end. It was left to his son to continue it.

But this policy of domination acted adversely on the central authority, i.e., the royal authority. With the rising importance of the Peshwa, the king was relegated to the background. The Peshwa controlled everything and beyond giving his sanction to his proposals, the king, Shahu, did not take pains, and had not the courage to interfere. His ease-loving nature was partly responsible for it, but at the same time he had implicit confidence in Baji Rao. He was perfectly sure of his deep loyalty and great abilities and therefore he let Baji Rao have his own way. The circumstances that gave rise to his policy of domination served to undermine the royal authority. The more did the king depend on the ability of the Peshwa, the less became the deference of the Maratha chiefs to the authority of Shahu. Their jealousy and resentment towards the Peshwa who was the favourite and right-hand man of Shahu naturally estranged their sympathies from him. The Peshwa determined to make Poona the seat of his power, began the building of his castle there, in the year 1730 and later on it was strongly fortified. The king did not approve of it, and insisted on his staying at the capital, Satara. The bad example of Baji Rao was faithfully copied by other chiefs, of whom the Pratinidhi established his power at Karhad, the Sachiv at Bhore, and the Senapati at Tulegaon, and Bhonsla at Nagpur. Each of them regarded himself independent of the king as the Peshwa. Such a spirit led automatically to the defiance of the royal dignity. All knew that the Peshwa had only plumed himself on the authority of the king and this was sufficient to antagonise the chiefs, who rightly regarded the king to be under the thumb of the Chitpavan Brahmin. The cumulative effect of all these circumstances was the rise of the Peshwa at the cost of the king. And since the

chiefs regarded the royal authority with indifference, the symbol of unity, the king, existed in name only. After the death of Shahu, that too disappeared, and into his place stepped the Peshwa. The Maratha confederacy therefore, as we shall see later on ceased to be an organic institution. The Peshwa could never wield absolute sway, for he could never fill the position of the king in the eyes of the people and therefore was no substitute for the symbol of unity—the central authority. Thus the policy of domination just as on the one hand ensured the rise of the Peshwas, enfeebled on the other the bond of unity among the various members of the Maratha confederacy and indirectly hastened its fall.

(*ii*) *His Policy of Maratha Expansion*

With regard to his policy of Maratha expansion his chief aim was to clip off parts of the Mughal Empire and establish the sway of the Marathas on them. Hindustan, i.e., countries to the north of the Narmada captivated his imagination, and rightly did he plan the subversion of the Mughal Empire to build the Maratha Empire. Such a plan was not inconsistent with the historical tradition of Maharastra. From time immemorial kings like Pulakesin and Indra III endeavoured to establish their dominion in Northern India. Nor was it unsuited to the circumstances prevailing at the time. During the decadent days of the Mughals there was an all-India Hindu revival, and it had spread abroad since the time of Shivaji from Maharastra. The Rajputs held out their hands of friendship for the cause, and with their sympathy Baji Rao made bold to strike at the "trunk." How eminently successful he was, is amply borne out by the result. He knew full well the rottenness of the Mughal Empire, the vast resources of the imperial provinces of Northern India and the poverty of the war-worn Maharastra. Therefore one of his motives in conquering Northern India, was to enrich his own country. He has been blamed for making wide conquests, which he possibly could not control, and assuredly could not effectively govern. He ought to have first strengthened his base and next undertaken slow but progressive conquest. Here he is compared on the one hand with Shivaji who always took care to strengthen his base, and on the other with the British, whose conquests were

of a pulsatory nature, and is found wanting in statesmanship. But the comparison is unfair, and no wonder that he suffers by it. For, the conditions of Shivaji did not obtain in his time. Shivaji could not venture beyond his base, because of the dreaded might of the Mughals and the unrelenting enmity of the neighbouring powers. Besides he could not command vast resources like Baji Rao. For him aggrandizement would have meant the veritable annihilation of his power. Baji Rao's base was far wider in area than that of Shivaji, and unlike Shivaji's it was governed by a number of hostile colleagues. The Chauth and Sardeshmukhi areas, which comprised the whole of the Deccan, Gondwana and Gujrat, were the extent of the Maratha confederacy and to strengthen them would have meant remoulding the system of collection, which could hardly be done without undermining the interests of the members in charge and consequently offending them. Baji Rao could not concentrate the collection of these revenues in his own hand. That would have plunged the country into an interminable civil war, which would have torn up the country to pieces. The only other alternative was to conquer the whole of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi areas, that is to say, the dominions of the Nizam and Gondwana, and bring them under a settled form of government. Could that be possible? It does not require any deliberation to say that nothing could be more chimerical than such an extravagant ambition. The Nizam was the most powerful and implacable enemy of the Marathas. In his personal abilities, and resources of his kingdom he far excelled all other nobles of the Mughal Empire who became founders of independent principalities. He was further a past master in the art of political intrigue. Many a Maratha chieftain had already played into his hands. To attempt the conquest of the Deccan when the country was torn up by factions and when the enemy was both resourceful and capable, would have been the height of folly. And why should he have attempted the conquest of the Deccan, when he was assured of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi? Certainly it did not hold out promises of vast wealth or resources as did Hindustan. The Deccan had been left a vast waste at the end of Aurangzeb's war and to attempt its conquest would have been a huge blunder. As Smith remarked in connection with the causes of French failure in India, neither Alexander nor

Napoleon could have won the Empire of India by starting from his base as Pondichery. Stretching the analogy a little farther, one can safely say that the Marathas could never have won Northern India if Baji Rao had frittered away his strength and energy in the conquest of the Deccan.

Next with regard to the nature of his conquest, which they say was not pulsatory like that of the British. Nothing can be farther from the truth than this. Baji Rao's conquests were not only pulsatory, but in a way no conquests at all. He overran the countries, defeated and humiliated the Mughal governors and forced them to pay the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi. Malwa and Gujrat paid these contributions to the Marathas and that was all. He had not conquered them to annex them to Maharastra. He had conquered to secure the Maratha expansion—expansion of the sphere of Maratha influence ; and the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi were its signs. Just as an expanding power first seeks to extend its sphere of influence and multiply its protectorates, so did Baji Rao secure sphere of Maratha influence in Gujrat, Malwa and Bundelkhand. Real conquest, i.e., consolidation, was farthest from his intentions. Had Baji Rao lived longer he might have attempted the task. But death came too soon on him. In Malwa he had posted his agents who were to realize the contribution, and preserve peace in lieu of the contribution. So was the case in Bundelkhand. His chieftains had been posted in different places each at the head of an army in occupation. It was more or less subsidiary system. In Gujrat the Peshwa controlled one half of the collection of the contributions and for the other half the Dabhades were responsible. What he did in the Deccan, he did in Malwa and Bundelkhand. It was no real conquest, that he attempted but only expansion of the sphere of Maratha influence, the precursor of the real conquest. This, the real conquest, the Marathas did under the later Peshwas. Baji Rao had paved the way for them.

On the whole Baji Rao's policy of expansion beyond the Narmada was best calculated to ensure the sovereignty of the Marathas, which he wanted should follow in the wake of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi. That would have, as he meant from the beginning, diverted the attention of his people from their internal feuds to united action, and would have thus pro-

moted unity of the people. It would have further enriched their country. But these pious hopes were not to be fulfilled. They were frustrated partly by the avowedly hostile attitude of the Maratha chieftains and partly by the premature death of the Peshwa.

Baji Rao as a General and Soldier

No praise can be too great for Baji Rao as a soldier and a general. Possessed of indomitable courage and extraordinary personal bravery, he was an incomparable soldier. No amount of hardship or fatigue was too much for his iron constitution. Seated on his horse he ate his meals, which consisted of the roughest fare of a Deccanee trooper. " An amusing story runs that once the Emperor Mahomed Shah, curious to learn something of the appearance of the great soldier, who was overrunning his dominions, sent his court artist to paint him. The artist brought back a picture of Baji Rao on horseback in the dress of a trooper. His reins lay loose on his horse's neck and his lance rested on his shoulder. As he rode, he rubbed with both hands ears of corn which he ate, after removing the husks. The Emperor in great alarm cried 'Why, the man is a fiend,' and at once begged the Nizam to make peace with him."[5] That was Baji Rao the soldier. In guerilla warfare, he had not a match in his age. He was only next to Shivaji. The way in which he humbled the pride of the most veteran commander of the Mughals, Nizam-ul-Mulk, bears ample testimony to his ability. Like Shivaji he inspired his men with confidence and commanded their loyalty. He led them from victory to victory, and the chief factors in his successes were mobility and brilliant tactics.

Baji Rao excelled as a general. His originality of plan, boldness of execution and eye for strategy, marked him out as a commander of no mean calibre. As a statesman, he stands heads and shoulders above his contemporaries in Maharastra. In grasping the vital issues of an affair, in devising means to meet a difficult situation and in utilizing the available resources to serve his purpose he had not a peer in Maharastra. His plans were the results of deep and accurate thought and

5 Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, p. 267.

calculated to endure far into the future and bear wholesome fruit for the state. His foreign policy and policy of Maratha expansion were no less original than far-reaching. Therefore it has been rightly remarked that Baji Rao had the head to plan and the hand to execute.

Balaji Baji Rao's Succession

On the 28th April, 1740, Baji Rao expired in the absence of his eldest son Balaji Baji Rao or Nana Saheb, who was then at Kolaba. From Kolaba he started for Poona when the period of obsequies was over, and reached there on the night of Monday the 26th May. In another week, i.e., on 3rd June, arrived his mother Kashi Bai, in the train of the Peshwa's soldiers returning from Berar. About the same time two envoys came from Satara, to conduct Nana Saheb to the court. Accordingly Nana Saheb and Chimnaji both left Poona on the 5th of June and reached Satara on the 13th. Shahu expressed his condolence for the bereaved family and invested Nana Saheb with the insignia of his father's office on the 25th June, 1740.

Nana Saheb was in his teens when Shahu made him his Peshwa. Born on the 12th December, 1721, he had grown up under the paternal care of his uncle Chimnaji Appa. Chimnaji loved him and carefully trained him in all the affairs of the state. He had received a good education and a fair share of martial training. But he did not get any practical experience of warfare during his boyhood and early youth. A domestic affair came in the way. Owing to the infatuation of Baji Rao for Mastani, who accompanied her lover everywhere, young Nana Saheb hated to go with his father. He used to accompany his uncle to Satara, where the latter was required to stay to keep an eye on the proceedings at the court. When Chimnaji went out on campaigns, as he frequently did, young Nana Saheb was entrusted with his uncle's task. Gradually when he was a little more than a boy he was permanently retained at the court, to discharge the duties that fell to the share of his uncle. Thus very early in life he got practical experience in diplomatic affairs of the state. No wonder therefore, that unlike his father he proved to be a greater statesman than a soldier.[6]

[6] *Nana Saheb Peshwe Yanche Charitra, i.e., Life of Nana Saheb,* by Sardesai, pp. 3, 4.

Shahu took a liking for him while he was yet a boy and loved him as his own son. Even after he was made the Peshwa his affectionate regard for him remained as sincere as before. On the eve of his father's death he was for two years with Shahu in his Miraj campaign and that was his first experience of warfare. Nana Saheb was lovable by nature and was universally liked.

Death of Chimnaji Appa

But shortly after his elevation to the office, Chimnaji Appa fell seriously ill in October 1740, and after lingering on for a month or two he too expired on December 17th, 1740. That was a great blow to the rising importance of the Peshwas. With his wide experience and great abilities he would have been an asset to the state, and would have steered the Maratha affairs clear of all difficulties. It has been contended that much of success of Baji Rao was due to Chimnaji's consummate handling of the affairs. He was not only a great soldier, but a tactful man. He was persuasive in speech and winsome in manners. His death coming shortly after that of Baji Rao was a great loss to Maharastra.

CHAPTER IX

REGIME OF NANA SAHEB PESHWA (1740—1748)

Raghoji Bhonsla's attempt to set aside Nana Saheb in favour of Babuji Naik

Nana Saheb's succession to office was not secured without difficulty. True it is that Shahu actually sent for him from Poona, and deputed Naro Ram Mantri a Shenwi Brahmin, and Jiwaji Khando a Prabhu, to conduct him to Satara ; but yet behind his back a party had been formed to set aside Nana Saheb, and get Babuji Naik appointed to the office of Peshwa. Babuji Naik was a moneyed man, and was a near relative of the Peshwa. His brother had married Bhiu Bai the sister of Baji Rao. The soul of these activities was Raghoji Bhonsla of Nagpur. He had embarked on the Karnatic expedition before the death of Baji Rao, and he got the news while the campaign was going on. Raghoji was never on friendly terms with the late Peshwa, while Shahu had always a soft corner for Raghoji. Besides, Raghoji had married the sister of a wife of Shahu, and thus claimed near kinship with him. As it was certain that Shahu would die childless, one of Raghoji's sons might be adopted. Therefore if the Peshwa was his partisan there would be no difficulty in that matter. Hence he supported Babuji Naik for the office of Peshwa, and Babuji Naik was a staunch friend of Raghoji. It was further urged that since the late Peshwa owed a huge debt to him, which could hardly be paid off by Nana Saheb, there would be no question raised about it, if Babuji Naik were invested with the office of Peshwa. But his machinations were frustrated by the prompt decision of Shahu who on principle was averse from transferring the office to another house. In this he got support from the Pratinidhi, who was a fast friend of Shahu, and a bitter enemy of Raghoji.[1] Consequently only twelve days after the arrival of Nana Saheb at Satara he was invested with the robes of his office on the 25th June, 1740.

[1] *Life of Nana Saheb* by Sardesai, p. 8.

Nana Saheb's Fine Qualities Win the Favour of Shahu

Nor did the choice fall on an incompetent person. Nana Saheb was young, no doubt, but his great personal abilities more than made up for his youth. His talents, affectionate nature, and pleasing manners endeared him to all, and if Baji Rao had left more enemies than friends, his youthful son made more friends than enemies. He had experience of men and affairs of the state, because from the age of eleven or twelve he was closely associated with his uncle Chimnaji in all his diplomatic activities. Shahu had watched his growth with the fondness of a father and himself a shrewd judge of men felt no hesitation in appointing this lovable young man to his father's office. But at the same time, he apprehended danger, and disobedience from the old and experienced nobles of the state. He knew full well that his young Peshwa, despite his great abilities might not look the master in their eyes, and that they might treat him with scant respect. To make matters easy for Balaji, he took an unprecedented step. He got together all the principal nobles and officers of the state, and made them take an oath touching his feet that they would willingly forgive all the omissions and commissions of the young Peshwa, and co-operate with him in his undertakings.[2] This fact points clearly to the deep personal regard of the king for his youthful minister.

Policy of Government to be Followed by Nana Saheb

On the occasion of his appointment, Shahu issued the following instruction with regard to his policy of government: "After Balaji Pant the elder Baji Rao achieved great deeds in the devoted service of the king. At length he started with a view to crush the Iranis and establish an empire. But his life was cut short. You are his son, and you ought to consummate his policy of conquering the whole of Hindustan, and establish an empire, and lead your horse beyond Attock."[3] Thus specifying his command he gave Nana Saheb leave to go to Poona. In fine the king wanted the new Peshwa to follow the policy of Baji Rao, and carry it to a successful end. The fact

2 *Shri Shahu Maharaj, Yanchi Bakhar Bharat Varsa*, February and March, 1900, p. 77.

3 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder (Marathi)*, pp. 77 and 78.

that Nana Saheb lived to achieve the object of his father and to plant the Maratha banner on the walls of Attock bears testimony to the right choice made by Shahu. Indeed in the pursuit of the imperialistic policy, enunciated by Baji Rao lay the prestige and dignity of Shahu. He would rise in popular esteem in proportion as the imperialistic policy was successful. Further he knew full well that it was in the interest of the house of Balaji, that this policy should be followed to its logical end. For Baji Rao had acquired unprecedented prestige by his brilliant victories, and had secured his ascendancy in the state thereby. Vast possessions had been handed down by Balaji Vishwanath, and Baji Rao had made considerable additions to them. If the office changed hands now, it may be prejudicial to the interests of Shahu and to the house of Balaji, and therefore, to the Maratha confederacy. Thus the appointment of Nana Saheb was a necessity on the grounds of merit, political expediency, and self-interest of Shahu.

The question that first demanded the attention of Nana Saheb was the question of succession after Shahu. It was on this issue that Raghoji wanted to contest his appointment, and indeed the question of appointment of the Peshwa was inseparably connected with that of the succession. Every right-thinking man in Maharastra was anxious about it, for Shahu was nearing his end without an heir to succeed him. And the Peshwa was most concerned in making a choice of the successor to Shahu. The failure of Babuji Naik indicated that Raghoji's son cannot be thought of for the succession. There remained only one other course, and that was to select Sambhaji of Kolhapur. The machinations of Raghoji had frightened Sambhaji out of his wits, and he too was present at Satara to counteract the designs of Raghoji. Nana Saheb after his accession to office naturally inclined to recognise the claims of Sambhaji, and with the full approval of his uncle Chimnaji, made an agreement with Sambhaji recognising his claim to the throne, all unknown to Shahu. For Shahu never favoured the claim of Sambhaji, and in fact could never tolerate the idea. Such an agreement with Sambhaji behind his back would have drawn all the wrath of the king on the Peshwa, and he would have been thrown out of office. Therefore the engagement was formed and kept in strict secrecy. It was a measure, which

was calculated to strengthen the hold of the Peshwa on the king. The fact that he entered into this agreement irrespective of the inclination of Shahu, unmistakably points to the Peshwa's assuming the role of king-maker. Already the power had been concentrated in the hands of the Peshwa, and after the death of Shahu, the nomination of a successor by the Peshwa, would have completed his ascendancy. It would have been entirely in keeping with the tradition also ; for if Balaji Vishwanath had secured the position of Shahu on the throne of Maharastra, and if Baji Rao had saved Shahu from the dangerous rivalry of Sambhaji and hostile proceedings of Nizam-ul-Mulk, Nana Saheb would have had the unique honour of nominating his successor. And it was not dictated by pure selfishness. That was, as Mr. Sardesai points out, the best solution of the vexed problem of dividing Maharastra into two states—one with its capital at Satara, the other at Kolhapur. It would have united the state, united the two rival branches of the same family, and the integrity of Maharastra would have thus been secured. At any rate, the measure attests to the farsight of the young Peshwa, and if he did not succeed at the end, he was not to blame. Ramraja affair left no room for the fulfilment of his agreement.

The Problem of Restoring the Finances of the State

The problem which next demanded his attention was that of finances. He had no money in the treasury, and money is the backbone of the state. A financial breakdown was the result of the extensive wars of Baji Rao. Baji Rao had incurred a debt of fourteen lakhs and a half, and that was to be paid off before Nana Saheb attempted fresh conquests or undertook new schemes. Unlike Baji Rao, Nana Saheb started with a handicap, but be it said to his credit that he soon cleared off the debt, and embarked on the scheme of conquest initiated by Baji Rao.

So casting about for speedy acquisition of money, he found a solution in the Karnatic. In 1740 the country had been overrun by Raghoji Bhonsla, and in 1741 Trichinopoly had been surrendered by Chanda Saheb. The latter was brought to Satara and kept a prisoner till 1748. At Trichinopoly the Peshwa posted Murari Rao Ghorpade, to levy contribution on the surrounding country and to remit to him Rs. 20,000 a year

from the revenues of Arcot. Further, on the plea of strained finances he got from Shahu the grant of all the country acquired from the Portuguese including Bassein, and the revenue collection of all the country north of the Narmada except Gujrat.[4] Thus he obtained a fresh source of money. Then he proceeded to regulate the revenue collection of the state.

NANA SAHEB AND THE AFFAIRS OF THE NORTH

When he felt comparatively free from the financial embarrassments he directed his attention to the affairs of the North. He had never been to Hindustan, and had no acquaintance with the nature of the country and affairs there. But nearly all the captains of the North had flocked to Poona to watch the turn of affairs after the death of Baji Rao. The Sindhia, Holkar, and Pilaji Jadhav were already there, and the Maratha agent at the Delhi Court, Mahadeo Bhat Hingne, was immediately called to the court. On his arrival the young Peshwa took counsel with them, and discussed the foreign policy of the Marathas for the future. The Peshwa learnt with surprise that Nizam-ul-Mulk, who had been called to Delhi by the Emperor about 1737 to stem the tide of Maratha raids, and whose attitude towards the Marathas was marked by a perfidy and tortuousness, was meditating measures to impede the further progress of the Marathas in Hindustan. He had not, as promised, even procured the imperial Farman for Baji Rao, confirming the grant of Malwa and Bundelkhand according to the treaty of Durai-Sarai. On the other hand he had betrayed an inclination to overlook the treaty. But the Marathas had no inclination to bate a jot from what they had extorted from the Mughals. Therefore they decided that with regard to Malwa and Bundelkhand the Nizam should be cajoled to procure the necessary Farman from the Emperor, but if he was bent on hostility, then they should win the goodwill of Jai Singh of Jaipur, and bring his pressure to bear on the Emperor for the purpose. With regard to the policy of Maratha expansion, as enunciated by Baji Rao it was agreed on all hands that it should be resumed and carried out to a successful termination. Having thus decided on the course of action.

[4] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 92.

Nana Saheb planned his first expedition to the north partly to gain experience of affairs at the first hand, and partly to negotiate with the Nizam and Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur.

Nizam's Attitude

When the death of Baji Rao became known at Delhi, Nizam-ul-Mulk heaved a sigh of relief and tried one of his tricks to free Malwa from the obnoxious Marathas.[5] Ignoring his agreement with Baji Rao he induced the Emperor to appoint Azimullah Khan to the government of Malwa, and actually sent him to the province before July 1740. But this trick was not of any great benefit to him. For, towards the end of the year he himself had to come to the Deccan, where his son Nasir Jang had proved rebellious, and at such a time he could not afford to quarrel with the Marathas. He stood as much in need of the sympathy of Nana Saheb, as he of the Nizam. Knowing this Nana Saheb sought an interview with him, and sent his agent Pilaji Jadhav to him with petitions addressed to the Emperor for the grant of Malwa and fifty lakhs of rupees. The Nizam told the Maratha agent that since the Emperor had granted Malwa to him, he would have no objection to giving it to Nana Saheb, if the latter ruled it as his deputy.[6] With regard to the demand of fifty lakhs, the Nizam replied that he would try to procure its grant from the Emperor. The evasive replies of the Nizam convinced Nana Saheb that diplomacy unbacked by force was of no avail at all. Hence he determined to enter Malwa at the head of a strong army, but his plans were interrupted at this time owing to the sudden death of Chimnaji on the 17th December, 1740.[7] After the obsequies were over, the Peshwa resumed his march, and met the Nizam on the way at Edalabad on the Purna in Berar, on 7th January, 1741. The old and wily Mughal overwhelmed the young Peshwa with attention, and requested him for military aid against his rebellious son. Nana Saheb promised to send a contingent of 500 horse, in return for which the Nizam granted a supply of fifteen lakhs

5 Sardesai, Vol. II, p. 31.
6 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 90.
7 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 90.

in ready money for expenses.[8] This partly relieved the Peshwa from his financial embarrassments.

Nana Saheb in Malwa (1741)

The appointment of Azimullah Khan made no difference in the attitude of the Marathas. They had by now gained firm footing in Malwa, and realized annual tributes from the people. Before Nana Saheb entered Malwa his chieftains had taken some of the outlying districts and outposts. On the 5th of January, 1741, Malhar Rao Holkar had taken Dhar, on the 27th January, 1741, Bande had been occupied, and on the 8th March the outpost of Deori had fallen.[9] By entering Malwa Nana Saheb meant to serve a double purpose ; first to strike terror into the heart of the Mughals, and next to renew his father's friendship with Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur. Friendship with Sawai Jai Singh was of the utmost consequence to the Marathas. His friendship stood Baji Rao in good stead and Nana Saheb could not think of neglecting him. Hence he entered Malwa early in 1741 at the head of a strong army. It was an armed demonstration, a triumphal march, undertaken to disarm all opposition of the Mughals. He passed through Sironj and Bhilsa levying contributions on the way. In May he reached Dholpur and there he met Sawai Jai Singh on the 11th of the same month. It was agreed that each would help the other in his need, and that the Sawai would procure within six months the imperial Farman for Malwa, and the right of realizing from the states north of the Chambal, contributions which the Marathas had already imposed on them.[10] No material gain seems to have accrued to the Peshwa, but it is certain that its indirect effect was very great. The renewal of friendship between Nana Saheb and Jai Singh was an effective check to the hostile intentions of Nizam-ul-Mulk. For about six or seven years, *i.e.*, till his death he carefully avoided molesting the Peshwa. Further Nana Saheb met Sindhia and Holkar at Gwalior and returned to Poona in July 1741. The expedition did not bring any financial gain ; for as soon as he

[8] *Life of Nana Saheb*, by Sardesai, p. 20; *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. II. p. 33.

[9] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, pp. 90 and 91.

[10] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 91.

returned to Poona Babuji Naik his father's creditor and brother-in-law pressed him for the payment of the debt (chiefly because he had been disappointed in his hopes of obtaining the Peshwaship the previous year), and he could pay it off "by the influence and credit of his Dewan Mahadajee Pant Poorundhuree, a service of which the Peshwa ever after retained grateful recollection."[11] Having cleared the debt he ordered the Naik out of Poona in July.[12]

Peshwa's Second Expedition into Hindustan

On his return the Peshwa went to Satara and stayed there for about two or three months till September 29th. He must have consulted the king about his intended second expedition, but there is no means of ascertaining what actually took place between them. It is probable that the Peshwa must have decided on this campaign in consultation with Sindhia, Holkar, Hingne and Bundele, during his first expedition. His chief motive for undertaking this campaign was to strengthen the hold of the Marathas on Bundelkhand. The importance of Bundelkhand as an outpost both for the secure possession of Malwa and for their advance into the Doab, can never be exaggerated. A firm foothold in Bundelkhand would automatically lead to the occupation of the much-coveted land of the Doab. Besides, the Peshwa specially wanted to bring under the Hindu rule the sacred places of Hindustan, Mathura, Allahabad, Benares, and Gaya. It was a part of Baji Rao's policy and he had forced the Emperor to give a favourable consideration to his claims on these places in 1737.

He Occupies Garha and Mandla

By December 1741, his preparation was complete, and he left Poona at the head of a strong army accompanied by many of the great chieftains like Pilaji Jadhav, Mahadoba Purandare, Bapuji Rethrekar, Patwardhan and others. On the way he was joined by Sindhia and Holkar. His imposing array was a terror to all, and as it wended its way through Khandesh into Malwa, the latter country came under his sway without opposition. From Malwa the Peshwa turned south and came to

11 Grant Duff, Vol. II, p. 5.
12 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 92.

Garha and Mandla, the two chief outposts on the Narmada guarding the southern frontier of Malwa. These two outposts were by their natural position as important to the Peshwa as to Raghoji Bhonsla. The latter had by this time conquered all the country between the Painganga and the Narmada, and had pushed his frontiers to the borders of Malwa. Naturally he was loth to let these two places fall into the hands of the Peshwa, who could easily dominate the northern portion of his dominions from there. The occupation of Garha and Mandla in March and April 1742, precipitated open hostility between them. Long before, the relations between the Peshwa and Raghoji Bhonsla had been strained. In 1737-8, we have already noticed that Baji Rao then campaigning in Malwa against the Nizam called for assistance from Yashwant Rao Dabhade of Gujrat and Raghoji Bhonsla. Shahu confirmed his demand and ordered them to join the Peshwa. But neither of them stirred out to render the much-needed help. Since then Baji Rao had determined to reduce the power of Raghoji, and bring him to his knees. Raghoji conscious of his power and influence with Shahu never cared for the authority of the Peshwa. He was a relative of Shahu and it was well-known that his son Mudhoji was to be adopted by Saguna Bai, Shahu's wife, and sister-in-law of Raghoji. Dabhade, Gaikwad, and Tara Bai, all avowed enemies of the Peshwa, were great friends of Raghoji. Besides, his kingdom lay, away from Poona almost outside Maharastra in the shape of a wedge. By 1736-7 he had conquered a large portion of Gondwana and had pushed his frontiers to the line of the Narmada. A little later he raided Hindustan as far as Allahabad and accumulated a large amount of treasure. In the pride of power he had even dared to defy the authority of Shahu, and would not pay the annual tribute regularly. When called to the court to render account he would return evasive reply. On account of all these acts of contumacy Baji Rao had determined to take him to task and humble him in 1739, when the invasion of Nadir Shah put a stop to his intended attack on Raghoji.[13] Before he could think of resuming his expedition he was dead.

[13] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 87.

Raghoji's Affairs (1739—42)

But Raghoji's stars were on the ascendant. He was ordered by Shahu to lead expeditions into the Karnatic which he willingly undertook, and which lasted for two years 1739—41. He achieved appreciable success in these expeditions. Encouraged by the favourable aspect of his affairs, and seizing the opportunity of the death of Baji Rao he put forward the claims of Babuji Naik, his own nominee to Peshwaship, and we have noticed how his attempts proved abortive. His failure at Satara was now more than made up by his successes in the east. The political convulsions that had shaken the government of Bengal and had ended in the succession of Ali Vardi Khan to the provincial throne offered a splendid opportunity for his ambition. The overthrow of Sarfarz Khan, the subahdar of Bengal by Ali Vardi Khan, meant the overthrow of all his partisans. One of them was Mir Habib, the Deputy Governor of Orissa. After his accession to the masnad of Murshidabad, Ali Vardi Khan attacked Mir Habib and drove him out. The latter now invited Raghoji Bhonsla against the usurper, and on his return from Satara about the middle of 1741 Raghoji deputed his General Bhaskar Ram into Bengal in response to Mir Habib. Bhaskar Ram raided almost to the gates of Murshidabad, and then turning south swept through the districts of Hugli, Midnapur and Balasore. In September of 1742 he was defeated by Ali Vardi Khan and had to retreat to his own country. Such was the state of affairs of Raghoji Bhonsla when Nana Saheb occupied Garha and Mandla. Already there was no love lost between them, owing to Raghoji's machinations against Nana Saheb's succession to office. Now Raghoji instigated Damaji Gaikwad and Babuji Naik to attack Malwa from the west, when he meditated an attack from the east, so that Nana Saheb would be taken on both sides.[14] Damaji accordingly attacked from the west in company with Babuji Naik, but owing to the strong foothold of the Peshwa in the province he could not make much harm and had to return.

14 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 88.

Nana Saheb in Bundelkhand

In the meantime Nana Saheb turned northward, established his authority in Ahirwada, Khechiwada and Bundelkhand, and spent the rest of the year 1742 at Orchha. This is the first time when the Marathas spent the rainy season in camps away from their own country. This gives us a glimpse into the nature of Maratha occupation of the countries of Malwa and Bundelkhand. They must have felt sufficiently secure in their possessions. While in Bundelkhand, Nana Saheb had the settlement of his claim in Malwa made to his advantage. It was brought about without his exerting the least in the direction, by a conjunction of favourable circumstances.

The Emperor Commissions the Peshwa to Punish Raghoji for His Raids into Bengal

While Bhaskar Ram was meditating an attack on Murshidabad, there came the agent of the Emperor to Ali Vardi Khan for the annual tribute. The latter sent urgent appeal to the Emperor for help against the Marathas, who he represented were sure to devastate and subjugate the rich provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, if they were not checked in due time.[15] Further Ali Vardi Khan sent for the help of Balaji Baji Rao, against his enemy Raghoji, and it is alleged sent some money to defray his expenses. This money was seized on the way by the Nawab Wazir of Oudh. At any rate this invitation of Ali Vardi Khan, was an opportunity of which Nana Saheb determined to make the utmost use. But before he made a move to go to his help, came in more welcome news from the Emperor. The Emperor ordered Safdar Jang, the Nawab of Oudh, to proceed to the aid of Ali Vardi Khan, and Nana Saheb to take to task Raghoji Bhonsla for his unwarrantable proceedings in Bengal. In return for his service Nana Saheb was granted the government of Malwa and an assignment for the arrears of the Chauth due from Azimabad (Patna).[16]

15 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 89.
16 *Ibid.*, p. 94.

Nana Saheb enters Bihar and Bengal, and defeats Raghoji at Two Places

In pursuance of the order of the Emperor the Peshwa now set forth to chastise Raghoji. The command of the Emperor lent an appearance of legality to his proceedings, and anxious as he was already to curb Raghoji's ambition, which was an eyesore to the Peshwa he did not need a second bidding. Raghoji had not only opposed his nomination to office, he had also instigated Damaji against him. The Peshwa therefore quitted Bundelkhand, and proceeding through the subah of Allahabad marched straight on Bhagalpur. From Bhagalpur he made rapidly for Murshidabad, and arrived there at a time when Raghoji with a powerful army was advancing from the east. His sudden arrival so terrified the citizens and the Nawab that the latter immediately settled the accounts with him and promised payments, on condition of the Peshwa undertaking to drive out Raghoji. Raghoji, who was at the time between Cutwa and Burdwan, as soon as he heard of the settlement decamped, and was chased by Ali Vardi Khan. But the Peshwa who had a poor opinion of the Nawab's ability to pursue the Marathas, took a shorter route, outmarched the Nawab and overtook Raghoji Bhonsla.[17] Two battles are said to have been fought, one at Kasba and the other at Bhadale or Bhadarwa, the position of which has not been ascertained. The battle of Bhadarwa or Bhadale was fought on the 19th October, 1742. After his defeat Raghoji sent his agent to the Peshwa suing for peace. Raghoji further complimented him on his statesmanlike conduct and showed his willingness to abide by his policy with regard to the Maratha confederacy. The Peshwa was thus pacified and did not molest him any more.

The Emperor grants Malwa to Nana Saheb

The conduct of the Peshwa in the late campaign left no excuse for the Emperor to further withhold the grant of Malwa from Baji Rao. But " to save the credit of the imperial name " Baji Rao was made the deputy of Prince Ahmed, the Emperor's

17 Grant Duff, Vol. II, p. 14. Refer *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 94; and also *Rajwade*, Vol. VI; *Chronicle of the Peshwas*. p. 44.

son on whom was conferred the province as an appanage. The Peshwa on his part entered into a written agreement, by which he undertook to maintain peace and order in Malwa, afford protection to the subjects paying the royal revenue, punish those who were disaffected towards the Emperor, not to invade or plunder any other imperial subahs, and never levy forced contributions on the country north of the Chambal. He further agreed to maintain an army of four thousand men for the service of the Emperor at his own cost, but if more men were required, their maintenance was to be a charge on the imperial exchequer. For the due fulfilment of these conditions Ranoji Sindhia, Malhar Rao Holkar, and Yashwant Rao Pawar stood guarantee and gave a written document to that effect on the 21st April, 1743.[18] This was an extremely clever device of the Emperor who made the chieftains of Nana Saheb responsible for the due fulfilment of the treaty, on the part of the Peshwa. He thus put an effective check on the ambitions of the Peshwa, and extended imperial authority to equalise the position of the master and the servant, the Peshwa and those who stood guarantee for him. After this, the sanad was issued to the Peshwa in July 1743.[19]

Nana Saheb's Return to Satara and Shahu Reconciles Him and Raghoji

While these transactions were drawing to a close there came alarming news from Satara. In the first place Shahu had fallen ill, and since he had been fast sinking in health for some time, the Peshwa apprehended his death. Further Raghoji had started for Satara, and his presence at such a critical juncture would be injurious to his interests and to the security of the country. For if Shahu expired, his son Mudhoji might be adopted by Saguna Bai, and it would create all sorts of trouble in the kingdom. And lastly, the members of the Dabhade faction were active against him. Damaji Gaikwad, Dabhade's agent was approaching the capital, and Yamaji Sheodeo, Pratinidhi's agent, had leagued with Raghoji. Hence he made haste to leave Bundelkhand even before the imperial sanad reached him. In June 1743 he returned to Poona, and thence

18 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, pp. 95 and 96.
19 *Ibid.*

he started for Satara where he arrived in the same month. He found the king in no dangerous condition at all. On the other hand he was gradually recovering from the effects of the illness. Shahu, when he felt quite well sought to make up the quarrel between the Bhonsla and the Peshwa, and settled their claims in this wise. The Peshwa was to have his original Mokasa; retain the jagirs conferred upon him and acquired by his father and grandfather; manage the governments of the Konkan and Malwa; realize revenues from Allahabad, Agra and Ajmer, three Taluqas in the district of Patna, twenty thousand rupees from the province of Arcot, and a few detached villages in Raghoji's district. Raghoji on the other hand was to collect the contributions from Lucknow, Patna, Lower Bengal including Bihar, and the whole country between Berar and Cuttack.[20] The southern and the eastern boundaries of Peshwa's sphere of movement were defined by the Narmada, the Son and the Ganges. Eastwards of the Son the whole country was assigned to the Bhonsla. Thus was settled the conflict between the Peshwa and the Bhonsla through the mediation of Shahu between 31st August and 9th September of 1743.

Result of the Settlement between Nana Saheb and Raghoji Bhonsla

The consequences of this settlement were fatal to the Maratha confederacy. By defining the sphere of Raghoji's activities and allowing him unlimited scope within it, Shahu made him stronger and far more defiant of Peshwa's authority than ever before. He assumed complete independence for all practical purposes, and that organic sense of the Maratha confederacy, founded on the control of the central authority, i.e., of the Peshwa was lost. Naturally all organic growth was impeded. It was the repetition of the arrangement made by Shahu between Senapati Dabhade and Baji Rao. Just as by completely excluding Dabhade from the control of the Peshwa, Shahu weakened the bond of the confederacy, and since then Dabhade, and later on his agent Gaikwad chose to go their own way often to the prejudice of Peshwa's interests, so now by making this arrangement, he contributed to the dissociation of

20 *Bharat Varsa*, July, 1899—*Pant Pradhan Yanchi Dusari Shakawali.*

Raghoji from the confederacy. The policy of the Peshwa to found a well-knit confederacy of different Maratha chieftains was thus defeated by the undesirable interference of Shahu. But from these two incidents one thing that is driven home to one's heart, is, that Shahu was not merely a figurehead in the Maratha affairs, which, as some historians seem to think, were entirely under the control of the Peshwas. No doubt the Peshwas were powerful, no doubt they discharged the duties of the executive head ; but yet they could not dispense with the royal authority, and the prestige of Shahu was great. The Peshwas were perfectly submissive to his orders and used to render accounts to him periodically about their receipts, disbursements and balance. Indeed the very insecurity of their position, as the chief of the Maratha confederacy, was the cause of this real difference to the royal authority. It was only when the king sank to be a figurehead that the Peshwas assumed openly regal airs and the headship of the confederacy.

Nana Saheb's Third Expedition to the North (November 1744 to August 1745)

For a year after this settlement the Peshwa did not stir out of Poona. He gave much of his time to the affairs near at hand—of Satara, and Konkan between September 1743 and October 1744. During the first three years of his regime he had overcome many of his difficulties. In November 1744 he undertook his third expedition into the north. He started from Poona on the 20th November, 1744, and entered Malwa, of which many a district were occupied. On 22nd March, 1745, Bhilsa fell, and a little later the Nawab of Bhopal entered into an agreement with the Peshwa's agent Pilaji Jadhav. From Bhilsa the Peshwa passed into Bundelkhand, where he had already established his sway in 1742. It has been noticed that he encamped at Orchha, almost in the centre of the country during his second expedition for a considerable time. After his departure Naro Shankar, one of his own chieftains razed the city to the ground as a punishment for the implacable enmity of the Bundelas, and forced the raja to transfer his capital to Tehri about 50 miles to the south. Naro Shankar selected Jhansi for his headquarters, and forced a good many of the citizens of Orchha to come and settle there. He also

invited many families from the south to the city. Thus it was owing to his exertions that Jhansi rose to fame, and became the centre of Maratha activities in Bundelkhand. That was considered to be the northernmost point of Maratha possessions, and, supplied an excellent base for their activities in the Doab, whose inexhaustible store of wealth Nana Saheb wanted to draw into Maharastra. Nana Saheb spent some time arranging the affairs of the province and returned to Poona by the 1st of August, 1745. Before the Peshwa arrived at Poona came the news that Jaitpur had fallen to the joint attack of the Sindhia and Holkar. The Bundelas were stubborn in their resistance to the Marathas, and yet Jagatraj Bundela was honourably treated and Jaitpur was restored to him. The dependencies of Jaitpur were divided between Govind Ballal and Lakshman Shankar. With regard to Datia Nana Saheb ordered that Arjun Singh should be reinstated there as raja with the Maratha help, and wrote to the Sindhia and Holkar to that effect. Since they did not succeed immediately he deputed Amrut Rao Shankar along with Arjun Singh.

THE KARNATIC EXPEDITIONS (1740—1747)

The Karnatic had no fascination for Baji Rao. His aim was the conquest of Northern India. Hence in his agreement with Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1731 he had promised to give the latter free scope in the South, if he had the same in the North. But his son could never neglect the Karnatic ; for if he neglected, Shahu would depute his rivals, viz., Raghoji and his partisans, to settle the affairs there, and Nana Saheb was loth to allow the ascendancy of Raghoji or Babuji Naik. Further the two Maratha states of Tanjore and Gutti were already there, and comprised a fair part of the Karnatic. Over the former ruled a branch of Shahu's own family, and over the latter Murari Rao Ghorpade. There were five Nawabships in the Karnatic, viz., Karnool, Kudappa, Suvanoor, Shera and Arcot, besides the European settlements. The Nizam had little more than nominal authority on them and the Karnatic was fast lapsing into a congeries of states that were often at daggers drawn against one another. The rivalry between the English and the French began in 1740. The Karnatic was rich and fertile, traversed by rivers like the Krishna, Tungabhadra and Bhima.

Therefore Nana Saheb did not like to let the Karnatic go its own way, specially when it was torn within and weak. And if he was resolved on this, he was still more firmly resolved upon not allowing Raghoji to gain ascendancy there. When in 1740 Baji Rao showed no inclination to lead an expedition into the Karnatic, Shahu charged Raghoji Bhonsla and Fatteh Singh Bhonsla with the task. Shahu's anxiety for ordering an expedition into the country was due to the repeated requests of the Raja of Tanjore, Pratap Singh, for help against Chanda Saheb, who threatened to destroy him. Shahu could never brook the idea of the obliteration of the Tanjore branch of his family, and therefore deputed Raghoji and Fatteh Singh to undertake the expedition. Murari Rao Ghorpade of Gutti rendered loyal services on this occasion. The Marathas entered the Karnatic early in the year 1740 and in April they ravaged parts of the Arcot province. On the 15th of May came the news to Pondichery that "a force of Maratha cavalry 40,000 or 50,000 strong . . . . advanced upon Kandanur and after levying from the inhabitants blackmail to the extent of 60,000 or 70,000 rupees, marched against Cuddpah."[21] They swept through the country burning the villages and plundering the people so that the latter flocked to the walled cities, and the shelter of the French at Pondichery. Even the wives and female relatives of the Nawab of Arcot had to be sent there for a safe shelter. Then the Nawab Dost Ali started to expel the Marathas and met them at the pass of Damalcherry on the 9th of May,[22] when a bloody battle ensued in which the Nawab was killed. Perhaps at this time came the news of Baji Rao's death and Raghoji with Babuji Naik hurried to Satara to have the latter nominated to the office of Peshwa. Failing in his objective he was back again in the Karnatic and once more ghastly scenes of depredations were repeated. Tiruvannamalai was looted during the Karthigai festival, when there was large concourse of Hindu men, women and children. Next the countryside was subjected to systematic ravages by small bands of Maratha horsemen. Thus pillaging and plundering the Hindu populace at the time of one of their festivals, just as

21 Ananda Ranga Pillai's *Diary*, Vol. I.

22 Indian Record Series, Vestiges of Old Madras, Vol. II, p. 279.

Baji Rao had done on the Ramnavami day in the neighbourhood of Delhi, these champions of Hinduism made a peace with Nawab Safdar Ali about the middle of December 1740.[23] According to this treaty the Marathas should help the Nawab against Chanda Saheb and if possible utterly destroy him, and in return they should receive one crore of rupees from the Nawab. After this treaty with the Nawab came the agents from Pratap Singh, Chief of Tanjore, for an agreement with Raghoji Bhonsla. They promised on behalf of their principal, fifteen lakhs of rupees, if he (Raghoji) took Trichinopoly and expelled Chanda Saheb. In fact the fall of Trichinopoly was of greater consequence to the Chief of Tanjore than to the Nawab of Arcot, for Tanjore and Trichinopoly are close to each other, and Chanda Saheb was capable and unscrupulous. At any rate Raghoji thus found a golden opportunity for interfering in the affairs of the Karnatic and enriching himself in consequence.

On the morning of Saturday the 24th December a troop of Marathas dashed towards Trichinopoly, but on the way swerved and arrived at Porto Novo about the noon of the next day. They surrounded the town, ruthlessly plundered the inhabitants, and collected a booty worth 150,000 pagodas.[24]

From Porto Novo the Marathas marched upon Trichinopoly, where Chanda Saheb was closely invested. While the siege was going on Raghoji Bhonsla sent an order to the French governor of Pondichery Dumas to surrender the family of Chanda Saheb. He further threatened the French with their destruction if they did not submit. He wrote a strong letter, to which Dumas sent a spirited reply. From the contents of Raghoji's letter it is evident that he required money more urgently than the surrender of Chanda Saheb's family. But Dumas' reply left not a shadow of doubt that he would get neither.[25]

Raghoji, surprised at the stiff tone of the reply, sent an envoy nominally to repeat his warning but really to ascertain what it was upon which M. Dumas relied so much. Dumas

23 Ananda Ranga Pillai's *Diary*, Vol. I, pp. 135 and 136.
24 Ananda Ranga Pillai's *Diary*, Vol. I, pp. 141—44.
25 Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, pp. 278-279.

received the envoy with great attention and showed him his large stores of grain, ramparts bristling with guns and the French soldiers and sepoys well-drilled and excellently equipped.[26]

It was this envoy that brought ten bottles of French liqeurs labelled "Nantes Cordials" to disguise their alcoholic property, as presents from the governor. These presents were appreciated by the wife of Raghoji Bhonsla more than the capture of Pondichery. Soon the bottles were emptied and Raghoji was urged to request the French governor to send a further supply of the cordials. Dumas sent him thirty bottles and when Raghoji Bhonsla tried them himself he found that his wife was right in her appreciation. Impressed by the undaunted spirit of the French governor and appeased by his wonderful presents he withdrew his demands and did not molest the French in the Karnatic.

In the meantime the siege of Trichinopoly was drawing to a close. Chanda Saheb had been reduced to the greatest straits, and starvation had undermined the valour of the defenders. Taking pity on him, his relatives, wife, and Nawab Safdar Ali collected a sum of 22 lakhs and offered it for the safety of Chanda Saheb. This was declined by the Marathas and as a last recourse, Chanda Saheb requested Bara Saheb to come to his help. This the latter did, but he was defeated and fell fighting in the field. His army dispersed to all directions, and the Marathas sent his corpse to Chanda Saheb. Now Chanda Saheb seeing that his life was in danger came out and surrendered to Raghoji on the 25th of March.[27] On the 28th of March, 1741, the fort actually came into the possession of Raghoji Bhonsla.[28] He appointed Murari Rao Ghorpade, as the Subahdar of Trichinopoly, and returned to Satara with the distinguished captives. The immediate objective of the King Shahu had been served. Pratap Singh of Tanjore had been freed from the local rivalry of Chanda Saheb.

[26] Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, p. 279.

[27] Ananda Ranga Pillai's *Diary*, Vol. I, pp. 161-62.

[28] In the Indian Records series the date of Chanda Saheb's surrender is given as 13th March. (*Vestiges of Old Madras*, Vol. II, p. 280.)

Effect of the Karnatic Campaign

Indeed this was one of the most remarkable expeditions of the Marathas into the Karnatic, both in regard to the area affected and the results achieved. The whole of the fertile country between the Krishna and the Cauvery had been swept and pillaged. Contributions had been received from the Nawab of Arcot, Raja of Tanjore, and from many a rich city like Kuduppa and Porto Novo. Trichinopoly had fallen and the Maratha sway had been established on it. Chanda Saheb had been taken a prisoner, and the French had been sounded for the first time. But the cumulative effect of all these achievements was not so much the spread of the fame of the Maratha valour through the length and breadth of the country, as that of the dread of the Maratha name for their wonderful capacity for ravaging the country, and the increase of Raghoji Bhonsla's prestige in the eyes of the Maratha people. The latter concerned vitally the Peshwa, who then newly appointed at once awakened to a sense of danger and resolved upon taking up the affairs of the Karnatic in his own hands. Raghoji presented himself before the king on the 27th June, 1741, and so pleased was he that he made a grant to Raghoji of the country between Gondwana and Cuttack.

Nizam-ul-Mulk in the Karnatic

But when the Marathas were busy extending their sway in the Karnatic arrived Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk in the Deccan, early in 1741, to put down the rebellion of his son Nasir Jang. On his way into Hyderabad he had an interview with Nana Saheb at Edalabad. By July 1741 he suppressed the rebellion of his son, and soon after the disorderly condition of the Karnatic attracted his notice. He felt ill at ease to find the Marathas established at Trichinopoly, and was meditating measures against them when came the news that Murtaza Ali, the Subahdar of Vellore, had murdered the Nawab, Safdar Ali, his brother-in-law, when the latter lay asleep in his (Murtaza Ali's) house at Vellore on the night of Saturday, the 13th October, 1742.[29] The sequel was a scene of confusion and

29 Ananda Ranga Pillai's *Diary*, Vol. I, pp. 201-2.

bloodshed. This roused the old Nizam to prompt action, for he could not suffer the Karnatic, included in his six subahs of the Deccan to lapse into disorder, that might invite the Marathas again. On Thursday, the 21st February, 1743, the diarist Ananda Ranga Pillai writes: "The Nizam, with his sons, kinsmen and nobles advanced as though the sea was rising and flooding the land with an overwhelming force of 70,000 horse and . . . foot and with . . . elephants in train; and encamped in great state at Arcot this morning, a watch after sunrise . . . Then Nizam himself, is aged eighty. He is lean of body and very fair in colour."[30] Then he set aside Murtaza Ali Khan, and proclaimed the young son of Safdar Ali, Muhammad Said Khan, popularly called Sahibzada as the Nawab of Arcot, and appointed Anwar-ud-din Khan as his guardian and Regent for the state. He next marched against Murari Rao at Trichinopoly. The latter shut himself up in the fortress, and the Nizam sat down before it. After six or seven months Murari Rao surrendered the fortress on the 29th of August, 1743. Murari Rao was conciliated and compensated by the assignment of the hill-fort of Pinukonda and lands round about the fort.[31] "By these means," as the diarist remarks, "Asaf Jah, who is an astute man, gained his object." He appointed Muzaffar Jang as Subahdar of the Karnatic Balaghat, granted him the Jagir of Adoni and fixed his headquarters at Bijapur. By October 1743 he quitted Trichinopoly and returned to his capital.

Babuji Naik sent into the Karnatic

This new arrangement made by Nizam-ul-Mulk upset the work of the Marathas and came almost as a shock to Shahu. He attempted to depute some chieftains into the Karnatic, but there was no possibility of retrieving the lost ground in near future. The Peshwa and Raghoji Bhonsla were busy and were gradually drifting into open hostility. All that has already been outlined in this chapter. Therefore Shahu preferred to wait till either Raghoji or Balaji was free, to sending any one else into the Karnatic. But it was otherwise with Babuji Naik, who

30 Ananda Ranga Pillai's *Diary*, Vol. I, pp. 212-13.
31 *Ibid.*, p. 235.

had accompanied Raghoji Bhonsla into that country in 1740-41 and had gained much wealth as a result. His one ambition, since then was to procure the grant of the Karnatic, for himself from Shahu. He had the full sympathy of Raghoji Bhonsla and Fatteh Singh Bhonsla, who used to urge Shahu not to allow the Peshwa secure a foothold in the Karnatic. Further Babuji Naik owed a debt to Sakwar Bai, the elder queen of Shahu, and to Shahu himself, and he said that unless he was allowed to invade the Karnatic he would not be able to discharge the debt. Hence when the Peshwa was busy in the Bhilsa expedition, the king assigned the subah of Karnatic and the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of the country between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra to Babuji Naik in May 1745. He was required to pay seven lakhs of rupees a year in return for these grants. Babuji Naik therefore must have led an expedition into the Karnatic about this time. In his onward progress he came into conflict with the Nawab of Suvanoor, and sustained a defeat at his hands. The full account of the expedition is thus given by Malhar Ram Rao Chitnis.[32] "Babuji Naik went into the Karnatic. Quarrels arose between him and the local chieftains there. He was required to raise an army, but he was defeated in battle and his camp was plundered. So he could not pay the army, who demanded payment and threatened him. Thereupon he immediately came to Satara, and requested the Maharaja that he was in difficulties on account of debts and the arrears to the army. His honour and life were at stake and hence the king should pay him five or seven lakhs of rupees and save him from the critical situation. Thereupon the king commanded 'What you have to do, must be done by the orders of the Sarkar. You should take written order. We would have sent armies and generals from this place to punish those chieftains who rose in rebellion. Why did you increase your army and guards without orders? You being a Subha of the Maharaja allowed yourself to suffer an ignominious defeat at the hands of the chieftains and brought shame. After all whatever has happened is all right. It will be possible to wipe out the disgrace by appointing another man as Subha.' On hearing this he pressed his request for relief and finding

32 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, pp. 110-111.

it of no avail afterwards took poison (arsenic) without much consideration. The king learnt of it in the morning. Therefore he sent some milk, touching it with his own hands. He was made to drink that milk and the effect of the poison was gone. Then the king saw him and gave him advice, made arrangements for his affairs and quieted the tumult. Yashwant Rao Potnis was ordered to take charge of the Karnatic and the difficulties of the Naik were also removed by a supply of the necessary funds in coin and kind." Thus the failure of Babuji Naik made the matters easy for the Peshwa, and opened the way for his interference. Back from his Bhilsa expedition he took up the affairs of the Karnatic in hand, and on the 5th of December, 1746, ordered Sadaseo Rao Bhao to embark on the third Karnatic expedition. At this time Sadaseo Rao was only seventeen. He had never undertaken any expedition before, and had no experience of a campaign. Therefore he was associated with Mahadaji Pant Purandare and Sakharam Bapu for guidance and advice.

The objective of the expedition is fully expressed in a letter of Nana Saheb dated 21st February, 1747, wherein he says " Babuji Naik should not go into the Karnatic. If he does he must be driven out. That is why I have sent Sadaseo Rao there."

Sadaseo Rao sent into the Karnatic

Son of Chimnaji and trained carefully from boyhood Sadaseo Rao was the pet of the Peshwa. He was really a youth of great parts and promise. He maintained the prestige of Maratha arms and won a number of victories. He defeated the Nawab of Suvanoor and levied contribution on the Nawab, and all the Polygars between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra. He further succeeded in wresting 36 Parganahs from the Nawab.[33] Advancing onwards he fought a battle with Nasir Jang at Mahadevpur or Mayanhalli in March 1747 and won it. On the 30th of March he met Murari Rao Ghorpade. Perhaps he was in the Karnatic till the end of the year 1747, so that if we believe that he

[33] Sardesai, Vol. II, p. 97 and Anand Ranga Pillai's *Diary*, Vol. III, p. 289.

started on the campaign on 5th of December, 1748, he spent full one year in the Karnatic. Under Saturday the 2nd December, 1747, Anand Ranga Pillai writes "This morning I interpreted to the Governor (of Pondichery) a letter received from Arcot. It says 'The Maratha chief Sadasiv Rao, Simnaji Rao's son is marching against Nasir Jang with 60,000 horse.' When this news reached Nasir Jang's camp, runners were dispatched to Arcot with Nizam-ul-Mulk's and Nasir Jang's sanads."[34] Thus there is no doubt that at the beginning of December 1747, Sadaseo Rao was still in the Karnatic, and must have come back by the end of the year 1747 or beginning of 1748.

Thus ended the third Karnatic expedition. Nana Saheb had undertaken it on principle, to eliminate his adversaries. That was secured but nothing beyond that ; and Nana Saheb wrote that to go to the Karnatic was only to graze grass and incur huge expenses, for which there is very little gain. Whether the Marathas came into contact with the Europeans, the English or the French, as on the previous occasion is not clear. But one thing is certain that the Peshwa made a new departure from the policy of his father. He was resolved upon controlling the affairs of the Karnatic in the way that he did the affairs of the North. This expedition marked the beginning of his policy.

34 Ananda Ranga Pillai's *Diary*, Vol. III, p. 246.

CHAPTER X

DEATH OF SHAHU AND CORONATION OF RAM RAJA

Last Years of Shahu's Life

While Bundelkhand was occupied by Peshwa's agents, and the Karnatic by his brother, alarming and indeed ominous incidents were happening at Satara. Shahu's health was perceptibly failing, and it was a matter of no small concern to him, and to those who were at the head of the state affairs. Besides the question of succession, which was a standing anxiety, factions were being formed at the court, and constant quarrels were going on between his two wives Sakwar Bai and Saguna Bai. Shahu, by nature an ease-loving and peaceful man could never have patience for all these, and indeed soon got disgusted with everything. That aggravated his ill-health, and infirmities of the old age, for he was sixty by now, hastened his end. The court-factions and the palace quarrels, as Shahu called the quarrels between his two wives, were only the forebodings of a coming storm. Shahu's end was only a question of time, and upon it was fixed the attention of all the Maratha chieftains far and near. Everyone awaited with a sustained suspense, the course of affairs at Satara, and there was no knowing what will be the sequel. The result was that the hitherto rapid progress of the Maratha expansion in the North and South was arrested for about nine years between 1743 and 1752. During this period the Maratha affairs degraded into a horrid mess of jealousy and intrigues. Out of these the Peshwa emerged more powerful than ever before, and indeed in name as well as in fact he became the head of the state, as shall be seen, about 1752.

With regard to the quarrels between the two wives of Shahu, the following letter written by Mahadev Purandare to Nana Saheb towards the end of 1746 is extremely illuminating:

"To Nana and Bhao Peshwa. After compliments about His Highness' health.

"In the afternoon His Highness feels feverish and exhausted. His stomach is all covered with the juice of the marking-nut (an application to relieve pain). Though His Highness' health is so poor, the two Ranis are daily quarrelling. This so pains His Highness that he exclaims, 'It will be far better, if God ends my life!' His Highness neglects his health. He listens to no one. Govind Rao and Yashwant Rao spoke about it to His Highness, but he did not answer. From time to time he says, 'What purpose does my life serve!'

"Last Wednesday Nagoji Rao Keshav Rao was at the court. Raghoram's men put to death a certain debtor. His Highness heard the case and then he observed, 'If my servants and guards had been involved, and had put Appaji Raghunath to death what could I have done? It is useless to count on my support or my power. The two Ranis are now supreme. I have no power to stop them from doing anything they want to do. They have caused a quarrel between the Kasars (bangle-sellers) and the Parals (a caste). The grocers have all gone on strike and we cannot dissuade them. When the grocers leave the town perhaps the Ranis will give way. If we cannot get any grocery, the maids must cook us a dinner but we do not want to get mixed up in the quarrels of the two shrews. We wanted to see Gajra Bai live happily with her husband. But the elder Rani threatens her son-in-law. From this her behaviour towards others may be judged. We have become powerless.' These were His Highness' words. In short His Highness is powerless against his Ranis. Such is the state of things here. For the last three or four days the moneylenders are visiting the palace. 'We are bankrupt they shout, we want money.' His Highness fears that if they sit Dharna he will be at his wit's end. Both the Ranis keep talking about the king's debts and the moneylenders. Bad times are coming. We must wait and see how the Ranis' quarrels end."[1]

Settlement of the Affairs of the Two Ranis

In fact the frequent quarrels between the two queens spoiled the mental peace of Shahu and undermined his prestige to a

1 Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, p. 320.

great extent. Of the two the elder Sakwar Bai was the root of all mischief. She was haughty and arrogant, and would not listen to any one. Shahu, by nature a peace-loving man, could never control her tongue or temper.[2] Saguna Bai the younger queen was docile and devoted to Shahu, and would act according to his wishes. Disgusted at the perennial struggle, Shahu sought the help of the Peshwa to settle the affairs between them, and to make a clear division of their possessions and privileges. The Peshwa willingly intervened and it was arranged that "(i) Neither Rani should quarrel with the other. (ii) The Raja should grant to each Rani similar cash allowances and lands. (iii) All jagirs in the occupation of the Ranis without sanads should be surrendered. (iv) The Ranis should not requisition supplies of money from towns of districts alienated to ziledars or mokasadars. (v) The Ranis should not seize lands in other persons' saranjam or Jagirs. (vi) The Ranis should not confiscate Deshmukhships (village offices) or watans (hereditary village grants of land). (vii). Whoever gives one Rani a present of land should make a similar present to the other. (viii) The Ranis should not take sides in disputes arising in the capital. (ix) The Ranis should not hear suits brought by creditors against their debtors. (x) The Ranis should not levy taxes or tolls. Both the Ranis have accepted these terms. This should continue for ever."[3] But even that did not improve matters very much, and Shahu's last days were embittered by these domestic disturbances.

Dismissal of the Peshwa Nana Saheb

Nor were these alone. Shahu's court was no less disgusting than his home. Many an intrigue was breeding there. The party hostile to Balaji Rao was especially active at this time. The Pratinidhi, Raghoji Bhonsla and Rani Sakwar Bai ranged on one side, tried every means to poison the ears of the king against the Peshwa, and thus to get rid of him. Rani Sakwar Bai had joined the intrigue against Nana Saheb not because like others she never doubted for a moment that whoever was the king after Shahu the authority was sure to pass into the hands of the Peshwa, but because Saguna Bai was a partisan of Nana

[2] *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 110.
[3] Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, p. 318.

Saheb and had lately made an abortive attempt to adopt a son of Raghoji Bhonsla, for succession to the throne, much against Sakwar Bai's wishes. But Sakwar Bai's party soon made its power felt. Already Shahu was troubled at heart and his mind was never at rest. Taking advantage of this restlessness they suggested that the Peshwa was growing disloyal and defiant in his attitude towards the king, for while the debt of the king was increasing, the Peshwa was growing rich, and while everyone thought that the Peshwa was extremely busy in the affairs of the state, he was indulging in carnal pleasures. These false stories about the Peshwa upset the already agitated mind of Shahu, and in a fit of depression he dismissed Nana Saheb from the office. It happened perhaps early in the year 1747, when the Peshwa had gone to Satara at the head of five to seven thousand troops to attend the court. The order of dismissal was conveyed to him by the Chitnis, and Nana Saheb felt more surprised than sorry for it. The dismissal sudden as it was, could not disturb the calm of his mind, nor did it affect his loyalty to Shahu in any way. The conspirators however had thought that Nana Saheb, so long in possession of the entire power of the kingdom would surely rebel at the mere suggestion of dismissal. Nor was their expectation in any way unreasonable. Any other man than Nana would have at once flown to arms. But loyal as he was to Shahu, he knew Shahu far better than Shahu knew himself, and therefore how best to deal with him. With quiet resignation as it were, he sent back the insignia of office, and further requested to send a man to his camp, so that he might hand over the charge of the king's army and treasure.[4] Nana Saheb surprised his enemies more than they had Nana Saheb. The question now was not the mere appointment of another man to the office, but the appointment of a man, who could comprehend the manifold duties of his office and control the situation of affairs in Hindustan, Maharastra and the Karnatic. In these countries were posted powerful agents of the Peshwa, who owed their rise entirely to him or to his father and grandfather. They were hardly expected to obey any other man than Nana Saheb and even if they do, who was to be assigned the vast acquisitions beyond

[4] *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 118.

the Narmada? Thus there arose a whole gamut of difficulties in consequence of the dismissal of Nana Saheb, and none of the conspirators had the requisite ability or self-confidence to undertake the vast responsibilities of the office. And far less than either ability or self-confidence had they that devoted sense of service to Shahu, which all the Peshwas possessed in plenty. Self-seeking they surely were, but not in a mean and narrow way. The dismissal of Nana Saheb indeed drove home to their heart the real importance of the man, and the fact that all his adversaries shrank back from the responsibilities of his office, is the real justification of the ascendancy of the Peshwa. It brought out clearly the contrast between Nana Saheb and his adversaries, and Shahu profited by it no less than the latter. The affair ended happily in the reinstatement of Nana Saheb to the office in the following way. "Then one day Nana Saheb was suddenly sent for to the presence. Balaji Pant came accompanied by one servant only, paid his respects and stood quiet. Then he (Nana Saheb) humbly said, 'Here I am ready for any service at your feet. But the only request is that I should not be kept off from thy feet.' "[5] The humble attitude and the devoted tone of Balaji's request delighted Shahu very much, and he had been more than disillusioned by this time. Therefore he sent for the insignia of his office and bestowed them on him once again. Thus ended the episode of his short expulsion from office. It served to tighten his hold on the king and nobility. The duration of his dismissal could not have been more than two months at the most. According to Malhar Ram Rao Chitnis it lasted for about a fortnight[6] and that after the departure of Sadaseo Rao into the Karnatic on 5th December, 1746. This fact, Sadaseo Rao's expedition into the Karnatic, prompted the enemies of Nana Saheb to conspire to throw him out of office, though no direct evidence is available to prove this fact. A letter written by Balaji Baji Rao to Govind Rao Chitnis throws a flood of light on the episode.[7] Further it gives us a glimpse into what was actually working in the background of Shahu's mind when he threw the Peshwa out of

[5] *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 119.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 118.
[7] *Vide* Sardesai, Vol. II, p. 111.

office. It was the accumulation of his debts, a sad sense of which had cast a gloom over his already agitated mind. But after Nana Saheb was reinstated in his office, he secured his permission in April 1747 to go on an expedition into Hindustan, which, he represented may bring him fresh accession of money, so that he may thereby pay off a part of Shahu's debts. The proposal seemed reasonable and Shahu gave him leave about the end of April. But the Peshwa did not embark on his fourth expedition into Hindustan merely to pay off Shahu's debts. He had to look into more important and pressing affairs there. The Rajputs were fighting among themselves and the Maratha chieftains had been invited to take one side or another. That had given golden opportunities to Sindhia and Holkar, to interfere and take opposite sides. Owing to these mercenary motives they were drifting from mutual friendship into mutual enmity, and were thus creating division among themselves, dislike in the mind of the Rajputs and distrust among all. Therefore his presence was needed urgently in the North and he embarked on what is known as the Newai Expedition.

The Newai Expedition of Nana Saheb—Its Causes

The complications arose out of a quarrel between the two sons of Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur after his death, over the succession to the throne. In 1743 died the Sawai, leaving two sons, Iswar Singh the elder and Madhav Singh the younger. Madhav Singh's mother was a princess of Mewar and according to an agreement, her son, younger or elder was to succeed to the throne. But when Jai Singh was alive his Mewar queen got for her son the parganah of Rampura in the kingdom of Mewar, and effected a settlement that in return for this jagir he (Madhav Singh) must serve the Rana of Udaipur, and therefore his elder brother Iswar Singh would succeed to the throne of Jaipur. This settlement worked well during the lifetime of Jai Singh and for three years after his death. In 1746 therefore Jagat Singh, the Rana of Mewar instigated Madhav Singh to attack his brother, Iswar Singh of Jaipur with his help. Madhav Singh fell in with his views and both made attacks on the kingdom of Jaipur. Iswar Singh, afraid of being overpowered by the allies sought the help of his father's friends, the Maratha Sardars in Malwa, viz., Sindhia and Holkar. Iswar Singh

promised to pay them three lakhs of rupees in return for their help. The two chieftains were allowed by the Peshwa to help the Raja of Jaipur on the condition, and thus the three confederates fought a terribly contested battle at Rajmahal against Madhav Singh, and his allies Rana Jagat Singh of Mewar, and the Rajas of Kotah and Bundi. The Marathas won the day for their ally, and Iswar Singh further requested Sindhia and Holkar to chastise the Rajas of Bundi and Kotah for their alliance with Madhav Singh. Impelled more by cupidity than by any principle they invaded the territory of Raja Jalim Singh, who fought with great valour, and wounded Jaippa Sindhia in his arm. But the latter more than made good for it by defeating Jalim Singh and by forcing him to pay a heavy contribution. Thus began the injurious practice of helping the Rajput chiefs, one against another without care or caution by receiving heavy bribes from them. It injured the reputation of the Marathas and made their name a dread to the Rajputs, who were lately so sympathetic towards them. Rajputana was soon overrun and ravaged ; and as is generally remarked, the remedy proved more disastrous than the disease : In their folly the Rajputs courted the help of the Marathas only to find themselves preyed upon systematically and ruthlessly. The Peshwa also is to blame for it, for he sanctioned the proceedings.

But worse was soon to follow. Holkar felt jealous of Jaippa Sindhia because he acquired a large sum of money in the form of contribution from the Rajas of Kotah and Bundi. While he was still revolving in his mind as to what he should do, to acquire money, came the invitation from Madhav Singh, who sought his help in return for a payment of sixty-five lakhs of rupees. Holkar was too eager to let go the opportunity, and having promised his help he wrote to the Peshwa to sanction his proceedings. On the other hand Ramchandra Baba, the Waqil of Sindhia wrote to the Peshwa to inform him that Holkar's agreement with Madhav Singh was not likely to result in anything hopeful and profitable. " Madhav Singh's policy is all full of fraud. There is no life in it, and no money to be got out of it " he wrote to the Peshwa. The conflicting nature of their correspondence placed the Peshwa in a fix. It was understood that the Marathas were the allies of Iswar Singh, and since one of the chieftains had pledged his help to Madhav

Singh in transgression of their standing agreement, it would simply mean either a breach of faith with Iswar Singh or if that stigma is to be avoided, a war practically between two prominent Maratha leaders, viz., Sindhia and Holkar, the former taking the side of Iswar Singh and the latter that of Madhav Singh. Now Holkar was a man of passionate and obstinate nature, and since he had given his word, without thinking what a suicidal step he was taking, he would surely persist in it. The only course for the Peshwa to avoid a civil war was to dissuade the Sindhia from helping Iswar Singh. Therefore he wrote to Ramchandra Baba: "If you (that is to say, your chief Sindhia) took the side of Iswar Singh the unity of purpose between him and you cannot continue. That would mean division. There would be deviation from the unity subsisting between you till now. It will entail disrepute in Hindustan and the affairs there may suffer on that account." Therefore he urges the Waqil to effect a compromise between the two chieftains, and not let them drift asunder. In fact there was not much goodwill between the two chieftains, after the death of Ranoji Sindhia, that occurred on the 19th July, 1745. Ranoji's eldest son Jaippa had succeeded to his father's office, and thus not only the office of Peshwa, but all other offices were becoming hereditary in the same families. This is an important factor to be borne in mind not only in connection with the rise of the Peshwas but with the rise of the Maratha confederacy, of which the basic principle was the combination of practically absolute power and hereditary succession. The quarrel came to a head between Sindhia and Holkar in 1747, and the Peshwa diffident of effective control from a distance resolved to come to the spot. He started from Poona on the 10th December, 1747, for his fourth and last expedition into Hindustan which is called the Newai Expedition because the Peshwa halted for long in the Newai parganah of Jaipur. The expedition was undertaken for two purposes, first to settle the differences between Sindhia and Holkar, second, to obtain money for Shahu to clear off his debts.

Result of the Newai Expedition

The period of this expedition is from the 10th December, 1747, to the 9th July, 1748. On the latter date he actually

reached Poona. In April 1748 Madhav Singh had an interview with the Peshwa at Newai and the latter promised his help to him. This agreement set Iswar Singh at his wit's end, and he followed his brother in opening overtures with the Peshwa. Nana Saheb however had no intention of precipitating a war that would mean in all likelihood, a civil war between his two chieftains. Therefore when Iswar Singh agreed to an amicable settlement of his dispute with his brother the Peshwa heartily approved of it. Before long an agreement was arrived at, and Iswar Singh promised to give four mahals including Newai to his brother, three lakhs of rupees to the Peshwa and twenty-five thousand to Holkar. Thus all the parties were propitiated at the expense of Iswar Singh, and the Peshwa, thus succeeded not only in avoiding a fatal civil war but, in getting money for Shahu. Further the Rajputs were saved from bloodshed and ravages.

Iswar Singh's Breach of Faith after the Return of the Peshwa, and the Sequel

But hardly had the Peshwa turned his back on Rajputana when Iswar Singh broke his pledge and disputed the right of Madhav Singh to the four mahals. That was to defy the Marathas, and Malhar Rao Holkar enraged at his breach of faith espoused the cause of Madhav Singh. With a strong army he entered the territory of Jaipur, burnt and ravaged the country up to the vicinity of the capital, and forced the Raja to give battle at a distance of about five to six miles from the capital. The battle lasted for about four hours and ended in the defeat of the Jaipuris who left about 200 dead and 200 wounded on the field. Thus humbled, Iswar Singh had no more hesitation to hand over the promised mahals to his brother. But there did not end matters between the Holkar and Iswar Singh. Many a mischief and consequent trouble, ensued on one side or the other, and Iswar Singh was ruthlessly harassed by his more powerful enemy. So disgusted did he feel, and so desperate of life, that he at last took poison and committed suicide about 1751. Madhav Singh therefore succeeded to the throne of Jaipur, and a large territorial gain accrued to the Holkar, who got Rampura, Madhav Singh's jagir in Mewar, for all his assistance. Thus ended the unpleasant episode, and

the developments later on were destined to widen the breach between the Rajputs and the Marathas.

LAST DAYS OF SHAHU

But far more unpleasant affairs than these were happening at this time at Satara. Dreadful things were casting their shadows beforehand, and while Shahu was pining away to death a cheerless gloom pervaded his life. Fates had conspired to take away his favourite companions, and as he neared the grave one by one they dropped out of his life. In his last hours, he found himself in a dreadful desolation that made the pervading gloom doubly dark. Shripat Rao Pratinidhi, the one companion of his life, who in spite of his jealousy and hostility towards Baji Rao and his son, had endeared himself to the utmost to Shahu, and who was as much a source of warm affection for Shahu as Baji Rao was of political wisdom, expired on the 25th November, 1746.[8] After him his brother Jagjivan was allowed to succeed him. Two years later passed away another loving and devoted companion of Shahu, Saguna Bai, the younger queen. She was ailing for a long time before her death, and though her death put an end to her pains, it increased those of Shahu. To these mental worries was added a sad sense of having no son to continue the line. Amidst these gloomy forebodings of the future, there ensued a ruthless tug-of-war between the various parties of the court on the question of succession.

The Peshwa returned to Poona from his Newai expedition on the 9th July, 1748, and then paid a visit to Satara, where he remained for about two months—August and September.[9] In the meanwhile a son was born to Bhao Saheb on the 30th July, and to Nana Saheb on the 13th August, and he had to come back home. For another year the Peshwa did not go far from Poona because he knew full well of the delicate condition of Shahu and expected his death any moment. Two minor expeditions were undertaken between 18th and 21st November, 1748, and between 20th January and 16th February, 1749, of which no accounts are available. Other matters of

8 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, p. 123; *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 103.
9 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 109.

social and domestic interest engaged his attention during the next few months.[10] In August 1749 news came that Shahu was getting worse, and he hurried to Satara with Sindhia and Holkar accompanied by a strong army. He remained there to witness the death of Shahu on the 15th of December, 1749, and to celebrate the coronation of Ramraja in January 1750, and then about April he again returned to Poona. This period is full of intrigues, and troubles, and is one of the darkest in Maratha history. Conspiracies and controversies raged fiercely round the question of succession, and none was there who was not swayed one way or another. The story is best told by Malhar Ram Rao Chitnis in his chronicle of Shahu.

"The elder queen Sakwar Bai without obeying the king, began to intrigue and formed a separate party with the Pratinidhi and Yamaji Sheodeo, so that he might adopt a son of her own choice. Shahu thought much over the question of the preservation of the acquired kingdom and decided not to live any longer in Satara but to spend the rest of his life on the bank of the Krishna. Therefore he pitched his tents between Mahuli and Satara to stay there, and called it Wanavaswadi or Forest-retreat. Then he thought of getting some good boys from Bhonsla families, and of selecting one out of them. Sakwar Bai, Pratinidhi and others did not agree with him. But the Peshwa, Chitnis, Potnis, Devrao, etc., wanted to do as the king wished. In the meanwhile Tara Bai, who was under surveillance in the fort of Satara sent a message to the following effect: 'Why do you search for another boy. My son Shivaji, who is an heir to this kingdom has left a son, whom I have kept concealed. Then why do you adopt another boy?' Hence no selection was made out of the boys that had been brought to Shahu. None could point out a definite way. In the meanwhile the king began to get fever and therefore became all the more dejected. He spent all his time in discussing spiritual matters, listening to the Puranas, and making gifts. He ordered all the Pradhans (Ministers) to be near him and began to say that he would not live much longer and that his last moments were approaching. Then all mustered courage and entreated him to give directions as to how the government should be

[10] *Ibid.*

carried on. To this he replied: 'The elder queen is haughty, and intriguing. She is not destined to take care of the kingdom in consultation with all of you. Sambhaji is indeed an heir to the kingdom, but has neither the intellect nor the controlling ability necessary to preserve the kingdom in co-operation with you all. Hence the necessity for adoption. There are the descendants of Shivaji Maharaj, and according to Tara Bai the child has been kept concealed. Now having instituted an open inquiry, we should adopt him if he be found genuine. The true descendant being there, great difficulties will be experienced in managing the affairs if we adopt an outsider.' Therefore Shahu got all the information in writing from Aai (Tara Bai) Saheb through Govind Rao and he put his own remarks on it. Then he sent for Baji Rao Amatya of Bande, and as he was not sure of his coming he again sent Yashwant Rao and Govind Rao to him. He was brought and was asked to declare the truth standing in the waters of the Krishna. Then Sahu was convinced that the boy was genuine and directed 'You must all act unitedly after me, bring the boy, make him your king and preserve the kingdom acting in obedience to his orders. When this news reached the queen, she felt highly enraged and started her own political intrigues. In her own mind she thought that she should have to remain under the tutelage of Tara Bai, and therefore she should select another boy for adoption. Further her intention was that she should remain in the background, control the affairs of the kingdom in the name of the adopted son, entrust the details to her own relatives and getting hold of these really responsible persons, imprison them and thus sweep them aside. Thus resolved she began her intrigues at various places in combination with her own men. She planned to prove that Tara Bai's grandson was an impostor and all that was her concoction. The king deputed karkuns of Balaji Pant Pradhan accompanied by 500 cavalry and the reliable karkuns of Govind Rao Chitnavis to Pangaon, which made the queen very angry with the Peshwa, Chitnavis, Devrao and Yashwant Rao. Thereupon she plotted with the Pratinidhi and Yamaji Pant to induce Sambhaji of Karavir to come with his own army, and sent Nyayadhish Khanderao to Pangaon on her behalf. She even intrigued with the warden and commandant of the fort to keep Tara Bai confined. In the

meanwhile the malady of the king increased. The queen even thought of preventing the Karbharis from getting access to the king. The latter however thought, 'the time was becoming critical; the sirdars who were ordered to come have not arrived; there is none else powerful and intelligent except the Peshwa.' Then he called the Peshwa alone, wrote out a document himself and in the presence of Govindrao made settlement in accordance with the document."

This document was of supreme importance to the Peshwas, and whatever was lacking in their legitimate right to the headship of the Maratha state that was supplied by it. It consists of two short letters and runs as follows:—

(i) "To R. R. Balaji Pradhan Pandit.

It is hereby ordered that *you should command the whole forces.* I gave orders to everyone else to do this, but none was destined to hold the post. We are ill and are afraid that we shall not recover. The government of the empire must be carried on. Someone of our relatives must continue the dynasty. But bring no one from Kolhapur. We have told everything to Chitnis. He will tell you our wishes. Act accordingly. Be loyal and obedient to the descendants of our house and maintain the court and the nobles. The Chitnis is our faithful servant. In consultation with him preserve our kingdom. *Our descendants will not interfere with your office.* Be prudent and wise."

(ii) "To R. R. Balaji Pradhan Pandit.

We hereby state that we hope and believe that you will ably conduct the administration of this kingdom. The Chitnis as I have already told you, is of proven loyalty. Our blessings rest on you! *Our successors will continue you in office.* Should our successor act otherwise, we hereby bid him with a solemn oath, and command him not to do so. Be obedient and loyal to him and protect our kingdom. Nothing more need be said. Be prudent and wise."[11]

These two letters make the Peshwa not only the head of civil government but also of the military. To him Shahu entrusts the kingdom and its welfare. His office is made hereditary. "Our descendants will not interfere with your office" he says.

[11] Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, p. 319.

Indeed in clearest terms does Shahu make the Peshwa responsible for the continuance of the government and of the dynasty. This document is therefore the Magna Carta of the Peshwas. Their rise was an undoubted fact by now, but this document gave it the air of legitimacy.

Death of Shahu and His Character

To resume the narrative. When Sakwar Bai came to know that the succession of the grandson of Tara Bai had been approved of by the king and supported by the Peshwa, her fury exceeded all limits, and she now meditated the murder of the Peshwa. She entrusted the task to her confidential agent Yamaji Sheodeo and for a moment the Peshwa's life was in danger. If the murder had taken place, perhaps the course of Maratha history would have taken quite a different turn. But Providence had ordained otherwise, and the plot failed owing to Sakwar Bai courting the aid of Govind Rao Chitnis, who was a personal enemy of Yamaji. The latter now plotted to kill Govind Rao rather than the Peshwa. But none of them was killed. Of course the Peshwa was not touched, and Govind Rao, warned of the designs of Yamaji, dispatched his assassin Tulaji before the latter could injure him. Thus the schemes of Sakwar Bai were frustrated one after another. She and her party had to dearly pay for their intrigues immediately after the death of Shahu. Shahu lingered on for some time amidst these intrigues, and breathed his last on the morning of the 15th December, 1749. Thus expired one of the kindest of men, most generous of kings and most god-fearing of the religious-minded persons. His weaknesses are glaring. He had neither the strength of will nor the cunning of the statesmen to control the critical situations. He was good and affectionate, ease-loving and peaceful. But he possessed in plenty the rare gift of judging men and matters extremely accurately. He hardly ever erred in selecting his own men and in reposing confidence in them. His loving and frank disposition endeared him to all, and more than made up for his defects. He was loyally served and devotedly regarded by all. He loved his relatives, officers and people equally dearly, and his good intentions won the hearts of all. He was worshipped in his country and passed away mourned by all.

But his personality was a real force in the Maratha state. He was the symbol of its unity, and though each member of the confederacy ruled more or less in virtual independence, yet all of them had to obey the commands of the king. That obedience was not due to the actual authority that the king exercised as such, but partly to the individual who happened to be king at the time, that is to say, to the personality of Shahu, and partly to the pious tradition of the Hindus that the king, however worthless, should be regarded as an incarnation of God on earth. Shahu's authority was personal rather than official. By this time the real powers of the king had changed hands, and he had lost the real initiative in matters of high policy, real control in matters of actual administration and real power, where the safety and integrity of the state were concerned. The king was now the sinking sun, and the Peshwa was the rising moon orbed in his light. So long therefore as the king Shahu lived, the Peshwa sincerely considered himself as his servant. That was due to Shahu's personality. But after him ensued a period of turmoil and troublé, the reign of a weak and worthless youth, who spent his lifetime in prison, and the Peshwa stepped into the vacant office of kingship and became the head of affairs both in fact and in name. Thus Shahu in spite of weaknesses was the king of the Marathas, but his successor Ramraja sank into insignificance, and allowed the Peshwas to be supreme in the state.

THE LIFE-STORY OF RAMRAJA

Now who was this Ramraja? Acquainting Shahu with the life-story of Ramraja, Tara Bai had communicated to him that when her son Shivaji died, his widow Bhavani Bai was pregnant, and only three months after gave birth to a boy in the Panhala fort. In order to save the boy from the jealous clutches of Rajas Bai she cleverly contrived to entrust him to a Rajput couple who had lost their baby recently and who lived near the fort. She administered a large dose of opium to the prince, which made him fall into a deathlike sleep, and at midnight raised loud lamentations that the prince was dead. When the sentries awoke she sent the news to Sambhaji, and obtained his permission to bury the prince outside the fort. As she took out the sleeping prince she handed him over to a Rajput, waiting

outside, and instead buried a few dead fowls wrapped into a bundle on one of the slopes of the hill. Thus was taken the son of Shivaji out of the Panhala fort and saved from the clutches of Rajas Bai. Soon after the Rajput took the boy to Bhagwant Ramchandra Bandekar and divulged the secret to him. For five years the latter provided the foster parents of the prince with money, but since it was rumoured that the prince was alive and Rajas Bai made a vigorous search for him, they fled away to the Konkan. There they lived for two years, and when the foster-mother of the prince died, the Rajput carried him to the protection of Ḍarya Bai Nimbalkar of Pangaon. She entrusted him to a Gondhali, or professional ballad-singer in the neighbouring town of Tuljapur. Two years after, the Rajput died, and the prince was living there incognito.

That is the early history of Ramraja. Banished from the royal family from his birth, brought up by a common Rajput, and grown to prime of youth under the care of an itinerant ballad-singer, he was unfitted by his early associations to wear the purple with grace and dignity. Not a tinge of royal pride coloured his character, and firmness and presence of mind were qualities unknown to him. He was even devoid of the martial qualities of his house. If his environments had made him incapable as a king, his heredity had made him worthless as a man. For was he not the son of the idiot Shivaji II of Kolhapur? Nothing better could be expected of Ramraja, and like his father he was at first a tool in the hands of Tara Bai, and then her prisoner.

Proceedings of the Peshwa After the Death of Shahu

Hardly had Shahu breathed his last, when the Peshwa flooded the city of Satara with his own troops. He expected danger from Sakwar Bai, who might call for the aid of Sambhaji in her intrigue. Therefore he first tried to secure the city for Ramraja and ordered his troops to occupy every street and the fort. Next his blow fell upon the partisans of Sakwar Bai, viz., the Pratinidhi and Yamaji Sheodeo, who were seized and sent away in chains to spend their days in confinement in distant forts.[12] Having thus disarmed Sakwar Bai he sent a strong

[12] *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, pp. 132-33; *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p 110.

detachment to the village of Pan, to escort Ramraja with due honour. On their way they met Darya Bai Nimbalkar, who was coming at the head of her five thousand horse. She demanded a token to the effect that they were the accredited persons, and on seeing Tara Bai's ring led them to the house where the prince lived. Shortly after they all started for Satara with Ramraja and reached on the 26th December the banks of the Krishna where they had to halt till the auspicious day for the state entry into Satara dawned. It was the 4th January, 1750, and on that day was to be celebrated the coronation ceremony. The interval Ramraja spent in merrymaking and receiving and returning visits. There Tara Bai joined her grandson.

FATE OF SAKWAR BAI

But amidst all these activities Sakwar Bai had not been left alone. The death of Shahu frustrated all her schemes, and on the very day of his death she was brought face to face with the hard fact that she stood all alone. A sad sense of unrelieved solitude and dreariness of life must have stolen upon her mind, and like all Hindu women she must have ardently longed for the end of her life. A Hindu wife only can best realize what the husband means to her, and therefore for long ages past she has not dreaded fire to quench her longing for her departed lord. Now with regard to Sakwar Bai it has been asserted that she was unwilling to immolate herself on the funeral pyre of Shahu, but she was forced to it by the combined pressure of the Peshwa, the council of ministers and Tara Bai. There is however no unanimity in the opinion of the standard authors. Mr. Sardesai thinks that the guilt of forcing Sakwar Bai to immolate herself rests on the Peshwa and the council jointly. On the other hand, Grant Duff is positive in his condemnation of Balaji Baji Rao, whom he holds entirely responsible for bringing about this cowardly murder. Kincaid and Parasnis concur with Sardesai when they say "the council unanimously resolved that Sakwar Bai as a childless widow, should be pressed to become a *sati* and to burn herself with the dead king." But one wonders how one can absolve Nana Saheb of the sin of committing a deliberate murder and hold the council responsible, knowing it full well that the council's opinion was only the echo of Nana

Saheb's and the members of the council were his avowed partisans, and therefore like the Peshwa, Sakwar Bai's avowed enemies. Only recently she was conspiring against the life of Balaji Rao, and now the Peshwa finding his opportunity must try to wreak his vengeance upon her. So no wonder that what the Peshwa willed, must have been dittoed by the council. It is more reasonable therefore to say with Grant Duff that "Balajee Bajee Rao secured his victim," viz., Sakwar Bai, by many an artful device. Grant Duff's opinion and that of Sardesai and of Kincaid and Parasnis are essentially the same. Therefore to say that the Peshwa was responsible for the crime, is to say that the council was responsible, and *vice versa*. But neither of the views seems to be borne out by facts, and the truth seems to lie further away. The Peshwa cannot be held entirely responsible nor can the council consisting of the Peshwa's partisans. Sakwar Bai herself chose to be *sati*, under the circumstances. The circumstances were unpleasant, and indeed intolerable enough for a woman like Sakwar Bai to live and hope for an honourable position afterwards, and therefore to make the best of a bad situation she determined to immolate herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. But the circumstances, the particular situation, had been created as much by Sakwar Bai herself as by the Peshwa. But before we enter into a thorough discussion on the point we must scrutinise the accounts given in the Bakhars written by Govind Khanderao Chitnis and Malhar Ram Rao Chitnis, and in the Shakawali of the Peshwas.

Different Accounts of Sakwar Bai becoming Sati

Govind Rao Chitnis mentions that immediately after the death of Shahu came Tara Bai to the palace and told him: "If Sakwar Bai remained she will create confusion in the state and will thus ruin it. She will not allow security to any one. It will be all right if she remained under me. With regard to being a *sati*, she should act according to her own choice and next we shall proceed as we decide. As to inviting Sambhaji from Karavir, the matter will not receive the assent of all and I also do not approve of it. My grandson is at Pangaon, bring him and set him upon the throne. What else?" When he got these directions from Tara Bai, he (Govind Rao) communicated

them to Nana Saheb. Then the Pratinidhi, the chief of Akkalkot, Dabhade, Rajajnya, and other major and minor chiefs came together and decided that " Sakwar Bai should ascend the funeral pyre. If she does not, she should be forced to do so. If she remains behind, she would cause ignominy and strife. It will not be of any avail to repent afterwards. We must now put an end to it." Then her brother, a good and worthy man was summoned and was told to persuade the widowed queen to be a *sati.* Thereupon he went to her and with threats and coaxing advised her the following as the best course of action. " I do not see any other chieftain except this Brahmin, who can the next day control the kingdom. If you remain behind at the instigation of any upstart you will have eventually to grind the corn of these Brahmins. There is nothing commendable in this. We shall put up with whatever is ordained ; but you yourself should depart after acquiring fame. In that case the people will speak highly of you." When she was thus indirectly told, her enthusiasm faded and she approved of the advice. Then he came to Govind Rao and Balaji Pant and told them to make preparation for the funeral pyre and added " if she ascended it willingly, well and good, if not we will force her." After the conversation the preparations for the *sati* were made and turmeric and vermilion were distributed."[13] That is the account in Govind Rao's Bakhar.

Now turning to Malhar Ram Rao Chitnis we find, " Having blocked up all the roads and avenues of the city and having posted sentinels round the palace and arsenals, the Peshwa, Govind Rao, and other Sardars came to the house of Govind Rao, and sat there. They summoned the elder brother of the queen Kunwarji Shirke and told him ' what is the intention of Bai Saheb? Is it to manage the kingdom in future in co-operation with us, according to the last wishes of the king?— or is it to be a *sati*? You should let us know her wishes about it.' And further the Peshwa sent message to her to the effect that he meant to take to task the disobedient officers by the orders of the king. Then he (Peshwa) sent his own men to seize Dadoba Pratinidhi, Yamaji Pant and their followers, and put them under surveillance. Shirke conveyed the message to the

[13] *Bharat Varsa,* February and March, 1900, p. 86.

widowed queen. Then the queen thought—" The scheme of putting Tara Bai's grandson on the throne has succeeded on account of the combined efforts of the all-powerful Peshwa, Govind Rao and all other ministers. It will be intolerable for me to accept her grandson, which would mean remaining under the orders of these and of Tara Bai. It is no use living after that." Therefore she determined to ascend the funeral pyre and sent orders for preparation to be quickly made. Just when this message was received the Pratinidhi and Yamaji Pant were arrested and put in chains and were sent to Purandar and Kawnaii forts."[14] Lastly, the Shakawali gives the following account: " Shahu Maharaj expired at about 4 *ghatikas*, on the morning of the 15th December, 1749. Just at the time the Peshwa arrested the Pratinidhi and his mutaliq (Yamaji Sheodeo) separately, and having put them in chains sent the former to the fort of Purandar and the latter to the fort of Ankai. He put the fort of Satara under his own control and management. Then he stationed military guards round about Satara and sent a word to the queen (Sakwar Bai) through her father as to whether she would act according to the commands of the dead king or become *sati*. Then the queen thought, the Pradhan (Peshwa) is powerful, the plan of the Pratinidhi cannot be fulfilled, and it is unseemly to live under the tutelage of Tara Bai. When her decision that she would be *sati* was communicated, the Peshwa went into the palace and made arrangements. Then was burnt at the confluence of the Krishna and Bena, Sakwar Bai along with the corpse of the king."[15]

Who was Responsible for Driving Sakwar Bai to Burn Herself on the Funeral Pyre of Shahu?

Now there is an essential difference between the main trend of these extracts. In the first, the author makes the council, consisting of the partisans of Sakwar Bai, viz., the Pratinidhi, Fatteh Singh Bhonsla, the chief of Akkalkot, Dabhade, and others, responsible for forcing Sakwar Bai to immolate herself, and therefore the Peshwa could not be condemned for that.

14 *Life of Shahu Maharaj, the Elder*, pp. 132-133.
15 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 110.

There is no means of knowing whether the Peshwa was in the council or not, indeed he is silent on the point. Govind Rao Chitnis obviously tries to whitewash the guilt of the Peshwa and does not even drop a broad hint at his complicity in the crime. Further he is wrong when he asserts that the Pratinidhi, of all persons, was in the council. For it is certain that the Peshwa got the Pratinidhi and Yamaji Sheodeo arrested on the day of Shahu's death. Thus Govind Rao's Bakhar is not reliable. And to think of the Pratinidhi, Dabhade, and Fatteh Singh, all of them Sakwar Bai's staunch friends and the Peshwa's avowed enemies subscribing to the verdict that she must be forced to ascend the funeral pyre, is simply preposterous. In fact, Dabhade was not present at Satara. How could he join in the council? Obviously the account is incorrect. If there was only this Bakhar to go by, then nobody would have suspected anything about the Peshwa. But Malhar Ram Rao Chitnis speaks the unpleasant truth where Govind Rao chooses to be silent. According to it the Peshwa and the Chitnis wanted to ascertain the wishes of Sakwar Bai, whether she would manage the kingdom in co-operation with them or be *sati*. The Peshwa further made his point clear by saying that his (Peshwa's) co-operation would mean more or less entire domination for he alleged frankly that he was resolved to do away with all the disobedient officials, and these disobedient officials were no other than the partisans of Sakwar Bai. Therefore the alternatives before Sakwar Bai were these—either to live under the tutelage of the Peshwa and Tara Bai, or to die on the funeral pyre. She chose the latter. Why? What was the harm in living under the protection of the Peshwa? It was not only harmful, it was disgraceful ; and that for two reasons. Firstly, Sakwar Bai was an ambitious, arrogant and intriguing woman. She aimed at power. Nor had she fully realized that her scheming would not be of any avail, for if her wishes to adopt Raghoji's son or any boy other than Tara Bai's grandson had been set at naught during the lifetime of Shahu, what hope was there for her now? Further she knew her enemies, viz., the Chitnis and the Peshwa were very powerful and they would, as the Peshwa said, do away with her partisans. It would therefore be trying for her, to live after her husband is dead and friends are gone, and she felt instinctively, as

all ambitious persons do, that the trammels of tutelage of the Peshwa and Tara Bai would be unbearable to her. For whom would she live? Ambition shattered, affection vanished, and friends far away, it would be a dreary existence indeed! Therefore she chose to die, rather than to live under these circumstances. Secondly, there was the family tradition in favour of *sati*. It was piously observed by all the noble families of the times. It was really a mark of distinction of the noble lineage, and a matter of religious sanctity. It would have been a disgrace if she had not ascended the funeral pyre with Shahu. And further her case admitted of no extenuation, for she was childless, and had none to adopt. Thus to save the family from disgrace and retain its fame bright as ever, she decided to burn herself with her husband. These conclusions are borne out by the brief but illuminating account in the Peshwa's Shakawali. There we find that the Peshwa first removed the chief partisan of Sakwar Bai, and then wanted to know her decision. The alternatives before her were, either to conform to the arrangements made by the commands of the king, i.e., remain under the supreme authority of the Peshwa, or be a *sati*. Sakwar Bai had clearly grasped her situation, when she thought the Peshwa was powerful, the Pratinidhi's schemes had come to naught, and it was impossible for her to remain under Tara Bai. Therefore she wisely decided to burn herself on the funeral pyre of Shahu. Thus the last two accounts concur essentially with each other, while the first differs from them. And in view of the fact that the first account is erroneous we can safely accept the second and third to be correct.

Next the question arises how far the Peshwa was responsible for driving her to this extremity and therefore was guilty of a dastardly murder? Well, there is no question of forcing her to immolate herself on the funeral pyre. She was given the alternative of living under the protection of the Peshwa, and it was not an unusual step which the latter took with regard to her alone. The Peshwa meant to seize all the power and manage the state according, as he said, to the order of Shahu. He wanted Sakwar Bai to live under his guardianship. That was just the thing which he started doing from the moment of Shahu's death, and continued it till the end. Exactly the

same was his policy towards Ramraja and Tara Bai. There was nothing new in his ultimatum to Sakwar Bai. But Sakwar Bai would not outlive a single moment, her days of prosperity and power. Her antecedents, her intrigues, her ambitions, her insatiable desire for power, were at fault. Therefore she said, " it will be intolerable for me to accept her (Tara Bai's) grandson, which would mean remaining under the orders of these (Chitnis and Balaji) and Tara Bai. It is no use living after that." Therefore she preferred to die ; she made the best of a bad situation. And the situation was more of her own creation than of anybody else's. If she were a good and sensible woman, she would either have lived happily respected by all as a widow deserved, or would have died contentedly with her dead husband. Sakwar Bai did neither. She died with a great disappointment, and she preferred it to a disgraceful life. Thus the Peshwa is hardly to blame. If he is to blame it is only for his highhanded policy and masterful attitude towards all in the state. He wanted to assume the same attitude even towards Sakwar Bai, and it is merely a phase in the rise of the Peshwas. When once she decided to die she did not hesitate. With proper ceremonies she ascended the funeral pyre, and passed out of life as proudly as she had lived it. The spot where the flames consumed her body, became hallowed in popular estimation, as being that of a *sati*.

CORONATION OF RAMRAJA

These affairs over, the city and throne secured for Ramraja, grand preparations were made for his coronation. The time on the bank of the Krishna seemed to speed by amidst gaiety and festivity and at last dawned the 4th day of January, 1750, the day fixed for the ceremony. At the auspicious hour the royal corteege started from Waduth, the place of encampment on the Krishna. As it approached the city Balaji welcomed it and rode behind Ramraja, waving the royal horsetail over his head. The imposing procession entered the capital and winded slowly towards the palace, through streets gaily decorated, and dyed red by the sprinkling of coloured water. On the balconies of the houses stood young married women clad in multicoloured dresses, and as the king passed showered

flowers and fried rice on him. When Ramraja reached the palace he was ushered in after the *Arati* was performed, and then after the ceremonial bath, he was invested with the royal robes and crowned, amidst a blaze of jewels dazzling the eyes, and the peal of auspicious conch-shell and trumpet deafening the ears. Simultaneously the guns from all the forts of the kingdom fired a royal salute to the descendant of Shivaji. Thus was celebrated the coronation of Ramraja.

But the pomp and grandeur was only a mask to hide the real state of affairs. They were soon forgotten and Ramraja became painfully conscious of the fact that he was to remain in the background, under the tutelage of the Peshwa.

CHAPTER XI

WOMEN'S WAR AND TRIUMPH OF THE PESHWA (1749—1752)

PESHWA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS RAMRAJA AND TARA BAI

THE coronation over, the Peshwa proceeded to undertake the sole management of the affairs of the state. He informed Ramraja that he was young and inexperienced, and therefore it would be meet if the entire authority was left in his hands. Ramraja easily agreed to this and contented to remain in the background, enjoying the pension of sixty-five lakhs a year and the company of no less than three wives. But if the weak Ramraja could be thus beguiled, ambitious Tara Bai was not to acquiesce in the proceedings of the Peshwa. She was determined to control the state, of which her grandson was the king. As in the reign of her son Shivaji II she wanted to govern the kingdom. But here she had calculated too much on the strength and support of Dabhade and Raghoji Bhonsla, and on her own armoury of intrigue. She had erred on the side of optimism. Shut up from all the public activities and politics of the state she had not formed a proper estimate of the Peshwa's power. Power was just the thing which the Peshwa was least disposed to resign into the hands of Tara Bai. And Tara Bai seemed to claim it when Nana Saheb thought he had the best right to wield it himself, for is it not that the dying king had entrusted the government to his care by written documents? So now the question was whether Tara Bai or the Peshwa should rule the kingdom. No one doubted that Tara Bai in her contest for power would range the enemies of the Peshwa—the Pratinidhi, Raghoji Bhonsla, and Dabhade—against him, and would plunge the state into civil war, as in the early days of Shahu's rule. The Peshwa himself apprehended great commotion in the state. But never before did he act with greater promptitude, greater foresight and greater calmness than at this time.

Tara Bai's Allies Dabhade and Raghoji Bhonsla are of no Help to her in wresting Power from Baji Rao

All the hopes of Tara Bai were now centred on the attitude of Dabhade and Raghoji Bhonsla. They were looked upon as equal in power with the Peshwa and fortunately for Tara Bai they were his enemies. Shahu had sent for them before his death, but they had delayed too long. Dabhade had fallen into vicious habits of life, and did not care for the public affairs. His agent Gaikwad was in Gujrat, and did not care to come to Satara. From one direction therefore Tara Bai had nothing to hope for.

Raghoji Bhonsla arrived soon after the coronation but he did not appear to be of any help to Tara Bai. His life had been one unending series of activities. He had raided, conquered and ruled vast territories. He had fought with the Peshwa to no avail. These experiences had made him cautious, and his age had made him sober. On his shoulders rested the burden of a vast kingdom, extending from the Wainganga to the sea, fringed by powerful states of the Nizam and of Alivardi Khan. He could not afford to undertake the cause of Tara Bai, and enter into a contest with the Peshwa. He had nothing to gain thereby, for now his son's adoption was out of the question. So from the outset he was loth to take the side of Tara Bai in the politics of Satara. And when Nana Saheb overwhelmed him with kindness and evinced warm friendship he was fully conquered. The Peshwa knew that it would be suicidal to offend Raghoji, for that would drive him into the arms of Tara Bai. He also knew the weakest point of the Marathi Chief. Forgetting all that had happened before, and the strain of feeling that subsisted between them, he gave him a warm reception at Satara, and paid visits to him at his house. He further granted all his demands, and invested him with full powers in regard to Orissa, Bihar and Gondwana. But these Raghoji had conquered himself, and established his authority on them. The Peshwa did not show any special kindness by conferring on him, whatever he had conquered by the prowess of his arms. Therefore to show a special favour, he deprived the imprisoned Pratinidhi of his jagir in Berar, which the Nizam had bestowed on Shripat Rao and

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conferred it on Raghoji Bhonsla.[1] Thus by many a concession he silenced Raghoji, and secured his goodwill. The latter satisfied himself about the origin of Ramraja by demanding Tara Bai to eat of the same plate with her grandson,[2] and this done, he paid his homage to the new king and went away to Nagpur on the 8th September, 1750, declaring his adherence to the Peshwa.[3] Thus Tara Bai was deprived of the support of another powerful chief.

Tara Bai's Intrigues Against the Peshwa.

But Tara Bai was not the person to own a defeat so easily. All expectations of support from Dabhade and Raghoji disappointed, she fell back upon her own resources, and took to devices, that threw the Peshwa into dismay. She gave out that she meant to pass the remaining days of her widowed life in the fortress of Sinhagad, where lay enshrined the sacred ashes of her departed lord Rajaram. There she meant to lead a life of devotion, and thus crown a career of troubles and miseries, by preparing to depart in peace. All believed except the shrewd Peshwa. At any rate, Tara Bai left for Sinhagad in March, and the king, the Peshwa, and Raghoji remained behind in Satara. Whether due to her departure, leaving Ramraja alone, or to her instigation, Ramraja appeared to chafe under the tutelage of the Peshwa. The latter, however, could not remain long in Satara, and had to go to Poona, where he had to perform the marriage of his son Vishwas Rao and of his cousin Sadasheo Rao. Ramraja therefore was left under the care of Raghoji Bhonsla at Satara.[4]

Peshwa's Counter-Measures.

In the meantime Tara Bai, who had gone to Sinhagad, then in the possession of the Pant Sachiv, Chimnaji, "threw off her mask of widowed devotion," and intrigued with him to bring about the overthrow of the Peshwa and to free Ramraja from his hated tutelage. But before long the Peshwa saw

[1] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 113.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 111.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[4] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 111.

through her designs, and to frustrate them invited her to Poona to grace the marriage of his cousin and son. Tara Bai accepted the invitation, but at the last moment pleaded ill-health and did not come. All the Astapradhans and great chieftains attended the function, which came to a close by the middle of May 1750. These festivities over the Peshwa peremptorily demanded the presence of Tara Bai and her confident Chimnaji Sachiv at Poona. They were taken by surprise and had to comply with his orders. Tara Bai reached Poona on the 29th May, the Peshwa showed great deference towards her, and on meeting her gave a present of 5,000 rupees. She was escorted right royally into the mansion of Babuji Naik, that had been assigned to her for residence, and therefore properly decorated for her reception. Having thus detached her from her confederate Chimnaji, he next proceeded to deal with him. Far other treatment was in store for him. Due deference was shown to his rank so long as he had not reached Poona. Once in Poona, he was informed that he should surrender the fortresses of Tunga and Tikona to the Peshwa, and the order was immediately carried into effect by actually occupying them. To complete his humiliation the Pant Sachiv and his son were thrown in prison on the 14th June, 1750.[5]

As if to give an air of legality to his proceedings Peshwa now wrote to the king begging him to come to Poona to dispose of the case against the Pant Sachiv. The young king must have felt flattered no doubt, but far more than flattery there was the compelling agent of the Peshwa, Raghoji Bhonsla who had been left behind deliberately for the guidance of the king during Peshwa's absence. It was not a request, it was an order. Never before had the Chhatrapati been thus forced to come to Poona, under the escort of an agent of Peshwa. "From this period" therefore concludes Grant Duff, "Poona may be considered the capital of the Maharattas."[6] The Peshwa had already decided what punishment the king should inflict on the Pant Sachiv and on his arrival, he was persuaded to take away Sinhagad from him and bestow

5 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 113.
6 Grant Duff, Vol. II, p. 39.

it on the Peshwa. He wanted it because in it lay the ashes of Rajaram and since he could not with decency forbid Tara Bai from visiting it, when in Sachiv's possession, he would successfully frustrate her intrigues if he kept it under his own control. No sooner resolved than troops were sent to occupy it. The king did accordingly and issued sanads for Tunga and Tikona to be restored to the Sachiv, who now brought to his knees obeyed the orders and obtained his release. Thus the Sachiv paid for his alliance with Tara Bai, and the latter found how helpless she was in the Maratha state, the real nature of which she had not yet fully comprehended. And because she had not, she was driven on, to further intrigues, which culminated in another suicidal step, and in the perpetual banishment of the power from her house to that of Balaji.

But if the Sachiv had been humbled there remained the Pratinidhi, who was fretting under the restraint of Nana Saheb. Him, Nana Saheb, was determined to divest of power and office, for he knew that the Pratinidhi released would be a formidable danger to him, and Tara Bai would have a willing ally in him. He therefore proceeded to deal sternly with him. His brother Bhawan Rao was appointed to his place and he was ordered to surrender all his possessions if he valued his freedom. He consented but when it came to actually handing over to the Peshwa the fortresses of Sangola in the Sholapur district and Mangalvedhe, his agent Yamaji, instigated by him prepared to fight. The shrewd Peshwa entreated the king, escorted by his cousin Sadasheo Rao, to march against the recalcitrant agent of the Pratinidhi, so that it might appear to all as if he had nothing to do with it and that the king wanted to chastise Yamaji for a breach of faith. Sadasheo Rao fought hard and forced Yamaji to surrender on Dashera day, the 29th September, 1750. On his surrender the ex-Pratinidhi Jagjivan was set at liberty, but nothing—neither power, nor prestige remained to him. His strongholds were bestowed on Ranoji Mohite, a Maratha officer in the service of the Peshwa, in October 1750, and his office had already been given to his brother.[7] Thus Tara Bai saw her partisans go down one by one under the heels of the Peshwa. But she had not yet seen all. The arrangements

[7] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 115.

that were made at Sangola by the king at the dictation of the Peshwa, who himself was at Poona, stunned her. The Peshwa remained at Poona, because he wanted Tara Bai to remain there, and not to go to Sangola where she might upset or at least obstruct his plans. The royal cortege encamped there for a month, and during this time Sadasheo Rao got sanctioned by the king the following plan about the future management of the state in the presence of Ramchandra Malhar, who was at first the agent of Sindhia and now that of the Peshwa.

Sangola Agreement

(i) Bhawan Rao who had been appointed Pratinidhi at the time of Ramraja's coronation was confirmed in the office. Basudeo, the nephew of Yamaji Sheodeo, who had been thrown out of office, was appointed his *mutaliq* or agent.

(ii) Since Dabhade had become careless and addicted to vices, it was agreed that the Gaikwad should pay him a substantial pension and that his fief of Gujrat should be equally divided between the Peshwa and the Gaikwad.

(iii) The subah of the Karnatic, which had been assigned to Babuji Naik was transferred to the Peshwa, who promised to pay larger subsidy to the royal treasury.

(iv) Govind Rao Chitnis should remain with the king to manage His Majesty's affairs on the advice of the Peshwa. Similarly Bapuji Khanderao should remain with an army. They were given for their services fiefs worth four lakhs a year, out of the Pratinidhi's estates.

(v) Yashwant Rao Potnis was placed in charge of the royal treasury and was given a fief of forty thousand a year.

(vi) Devrai Lapate was put in charge of the private affairs and estates of the king.

(vii) The Astapradhans were required, each according to his possessions, to pay an annual subsidy to the king.

(viii) The revenues of Malwa amounting to a crore and a half were divided between the Sindhia, Holkar, and other chieftains in the following manner. To Holkar was assigned 74 lakhs ; to Sindhia 65 lakhs and a half ; the rest to other

chieftains, chief among them being Pawar, who got ten lakhs and a half.[8]

Significance of the Sangola Agreement and Tara Bai's Determination

This arrangement tied the hands and feet of Ramraja, and tightened the hold of the Peshwa on him. He depended on the servants of the Peshwa for practically everything. The Peshwa, on the other hand, acquired fresh territories in Gujrat and Karnatic that made him more powerful than ever. Tara Bai got furious with Ramraja when she came to know of this arrangement. She concluded that Ramraja's weakness was the root of the Peshwa's increased power. Then were made new appointments or confirmations to the different offices of the state. The office of Peshwa was confirmed to Nana Saheb, of Pratinidhi to Bhawan Rao, of Nyayadhish to Khanderao Kashi, of Panditrao to Dhondo Upadhye, of Mantri to Ghanashyam Narain, of Pant Sachiv to Chimnaji Narayin, of Amatya to Bagwant Rao and of Sumant to Vithal Rao Anand Rao. The office of Senapati was taken from Yashwant Rao Dabhade because of his immoral habits of life and was conferred on his son Trimbak Rao.

After these arrangements were made at Sangola the king left for Satara, and Sadasheo Rao returned to Poona. The new arrangements bring out clearly one vital fact, and that is, the unrivalled supremacy of the Peshwa. He had crushed the Pratinidhi, conciliated Raghoji Bhonsla, reduced the Dabhade to insignificance, disarmed Tara Bai, and had the king under his thumb. Tara Bai noticed all these, and writhed, as it were in bitter indignation. And if she cursed Nana Saheb for his successful proceedings, thrice did she curse her own grandson Ramraja. For who else was, the enraged queen thought, responsible for these highhanded measures of the Peshwa? Who had given his cowardly consent to them? None but Ramraja. It was owing to his imbecility that the Peshwa had effectively disarmed Tara Bai. He ought to have sided with her and frustrated the schemes of the Peshwa. Hence she must seize Ramraja, and with

[8] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, pp. 115 and 116.

Ramraja under her, she would wield all the authority of the state. In her rage, the old queen forgot, that there was a wide chasm between her son's time and that of her grandson. To seize Ramraja was not to seize the state, or to capture the king was not to capture power. The king was now divested of all the royal authority, real governing power. Real kingship had changed hands. Imperceptibly the power had slipped into the hands of the Peshwa, and so it did not much matter who captured the king, Tara Bai or the Peshwa. That is why by capturing Ramraja Tara Bai profited nothing. On the other hand, she allowed the Peshwa for ever to act as the representative of the king, as his vicegerent. But Tara Bai was inexorable. Determined upon this last recourse she left Poona on a pretended visit to the shrine of Sambhu Mahadev near Satara. But before she left Poona she had woven a web of intrigues to undermine the supremacy of the Peshwa. With consummate skill she drew on to her side Uma Bai Dabhade, who had been offended by the Sangola arrangements, which deprived her son of the possessions of Gujrat.

Conspiracy of Tara Bai and Uma Bai Dabhade Against the Peshwa

It was agreed between the two ladies that Uma Bai should help Tara Bai with her Gujrat troops, provided Nana Saheb did not listen to her protest against the Sangola arrangements and revoked them. A little later they met at Sambhu Mahadev's temple on the 1st of October, perhaps to concert measures for their future proceedings and then Tara Bai returned to Satara. Uma Bai, however, advised her agent to represent her case to the ex-Peshwa, but it being of no avail, she went to meet him in person. The meeting took place at Alandi on the 23rd November, and the Peshwa did not budge an inch from the previous arrangements. Tara Bai, before she left Poona, had apprised the commandant of the fort of Satara, her old servant of her designs, and had ordered him as early as the 15th and 20th September to store enough provisions and munitions of war. Now on her arrival on the 29th October she gathered all the officers of the fort and conquered their scruples by persuasion and handsome presents. When all was ready came Ramraja to the town of Satara on the 17th

November flushed with his successes at Mangalvedhe and Sangola. With him came Govind Rao Chitnis and Trimbak Purandare at the head of a large cavalry. On the 23rd Tara Bai invited her grandson to the palace, inside the fort. He came and after he had paid his respects, and was graciously received she took him aside and pressed him to dismiss Balaji from office, and rule the kingdom in consultation with the Pratinidhi. Since Ramraja would not listen to her, she showed her anger by bidding him go without further conversation. But for the strong bodyguard, commanded by Bapuji Khande Rao, the young king would have been a prisoner of Tara Bai that very day. But Tara Bai did not despair ; and if she failed that day, she effected her purpose the day after.

TARA BAI CAPTURES RAMRAJA ON CHAMPASASTHI DAY, THE 24TH NOVEMBER, 1750.

The day after was the feast of Champasasthi. Early in the morning Tara Bai sent her agents to the king to request him to spend the day with her. Bapuji, who had noticed the anger of the old queen on the previous day begged his master not to go, and Ramraja seemed to see reason. But overcome by the persuasion and subtle speeches of the queen's agents he consented, and to show confidence in his grandmother rode up alone to the northern gate of the fort. An hour after Ramraja gave the slip Khande Rao galloped with his soldiers to effect his release, but the gate was closed and the sentries warned him to retire or they would fire. It was impossible to force the gate, and the loyal soldier sadly returned the way he had come. But Ramraja's slip was fatal to him. As the king presented himself before his grandmother unattended, the latter's delight knew no bounds at the prospect of fulfilling her ends so easily. She was all attention and kindness towards him, and fed him with great care. But after bidding her goodbye when he came to the gate he found it closed and strongly guarded by Tara Bai's soldiers. He ordered them to let him pass but they stood blocking the way. They told him that his grandmother had ordered them not to let him leave the fort. Ramraja's heart sank within him, and like his servant Bapuji Khanderao, who had come a few hours before to rescue his master, he too returned sadly the way he had come.

When he came to the palace he found it swarming with soldiers and no Tara Bai to be seen. They disarmed him, arrested him and threw him into prison. It was a life-long imprisonment for him. So long as Tara Bai lived he was destined to remain a captive, but even afterwards the Peshwas never bothered themselves about his release, partly because it had become an established practice by that time and partly because it suited their interests admirably. For sixty-eight years Ramraja and his descendants remained prisoners in Satara fort, and it was only when a foreign nation conquered their kingdom that their deliverance was effected.

Thus was brought about the life-long imprisonment of Ramraja on the 24th November, 1750, in the fort of Satara, and with it departed all power and prestige from the house of Shivaji. Tara Bai's insatiable ambition for authority resulted in this tragic end of Bhonsla's sovereignty. This incident marks the downfall of the House of Shivaji. But it was not Tara Bai who brought about the downfall. It had long begun and without being a prisoner of Tara Bai Ramraja was a mere puppet in the hands of the Peshwa. Tara Bai only gave a tangible shape to an already well-known fact. She contributed to complete the downfall.

Tara Bai Attempts to Seize the Power by a Coup-de-Main

With the capture of Ramraja the main fact of her scheme had been accomplished. Now she wanted to usurp the power, and set up a Peshwa in the place of Nana Saheb, and carry on the administration by herself. An army necessary for a *coup-de-main* was coming from Gujrat under Damaji Gaikwad. But whom to make the Peshwa? She followed a tortuous policy. Discontented Ramdas Pant, Diwan of Salabat Jang was drawn into the party and in return for his help in her intrigues she promised the office of Peshwa to his nephew. And the time chosen for the coup was most opportune. The Peshwa had gone south on an expedition. His relations with Sadasheo Rao, his own cousin, Mahadoba Purandare, and Ramchandra Pant were strained at this time. There was no love lost between Sindhia and Holkar and though a reconciliation had been effected by the Peshwa only lately, they were far from

friendly. Thus in the absence of the Peshwa and when his affairs were in confusion she wanted to overthrow him and usurp the power.

Strain of Feeling between Nana Saheb and Sadasheo Rao

The confusion in the affairs of the Peshwa demands a little explanation in order to make the narrative intelligible. The arrangements made at Sangola not only irrevocably offended Uma Bai Dabhade, but it also adversely affected the relations between Nana Saheb and Sadasheo Rao. Not that Nana Saheb had actually any complaint against him with regard to the arrangement, but the prominent part taken by Sadasheo Rao for some time past in the disposition of the state affairs was intolerable to Gopika Bai, his sister-in-law and Peshwa's wife. She poisoned Nana Saheb's mind against Sadasheo Rao, and the former without much scrutinising the truth entertained suspicion about him. The latter then in the flower of his youth and strikingly handsome was sore at heart, and in consultation with Ramchandra Pant he thought of taking service with Sambhaji of Kolhapur.[9] Sambhaji promised to make him his Peshwa and actually wrote to Nana Saheb for permission. Nana Saheb, apprized of the intention of his brother to leave his house, regretted the past and effected a reconciliation with him.

Two persons, it is suspected, were aiding Sadasheo Rao in his proceedings against the wishes of his brother, to go away from Poona and take service with Sambhaji of Kolhapur.[10] One was Ramchandra Bawa, the other Mahadaji Purandare. Ramchandra Bawa was a man of mean and selfish motives. He was at first a Kulkarni of the village Arvali in Sawantwadi, and owing to certain fault of his he had to flee for life to Satara. There he took service with Kacheshwar Bawa Rajguru and then with the Peshwa, who noticing his abilities made him Diwan of Ranoji Sindhia, and after the latter's death of his son Jaippa Sindhia.[11] Owing to his crooked nature and unpardonable greed for amassing wealth Jaippa dismissed him

9 Sardesai, Vol. II, p. 256.
10 *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 117.
11 *Ibid.*, p. 114.

while at Poona in the hot weather of 1750. Thrown out of office he ingratiated himself into the favour of Sadasheo Rao, whom it is said, he paid thirty-six lakhs of rupees, and was therefore employed by the Peshwa for some time as his Diwan. But owing to his mischief with Sadasheo Rao against the Peshwa, the latter got furious and drove him out of office in 1751. With regard to Mahadaji Purandare the following letter of Nana Saheb to Jaippa Sindhia written about January 1751, will throw a flood of light.

Condition of Balaji Rāo's Affairs

" For the past three years there has been subsisting ill-feeling between Mahadoba and myself. It has increased since the Satara affairs (death of Shahu). He is aggrieved for my partiality. With a view to make me a fool in every affair, he has been corresponding with Ramchandra Bawa and Sadasheo Bhao. Mahadoba's intentions appeared to be to frustrate all my plans in their primary objectives, and to send the army to Bhao with this aim in view. Having forced me to retire he wanted to raise Tara Bai with the assistance of Govind Rao. I should remain under the orders of all. Therefore I wrote plainly to Bhao " If you are really my brother, then come immediately after you receive this letter. So that we might take proper action against the Dabhade. Because of that he had to come. We began in right earnest our work against Dabhade. Nasirjang died. We thought we might confiscate and extort ten or twenty lakhs. By showing our masterfulness we should get what we could. On account of this Mahadoba was very much displeased and went home. Some say he would join Tara Bai. We think, he being an old and respectable servant, would not turn a traitor, but who knows what will happen in future. However, the relations between myself and Mahadoba have been strained. Bhao is wavering between Mahadoba and myself. Ramchandra Bawa, to all outward appearances, is on our side, but very secretly he is on the side of Mahadoba. Here he displays his loyalty to his master everywhere, but you know his innermost intention. Trimbak Vinayak and Kanher Pant are merely the creatures of Mahadoba. Gangoba and Mahadoba are deep in intrigue

with each other. Our full dependence is on God. We have acted in this way with a trust in you."[12]

Such was the state of affairs when about November 1750 Nana Saheb started for the Karnatic at the head of a strong army, accompanied by Fatteh Singh and Raghoji Bhonsla. His objective was to dethrone Nasir Jang and set up Ghaziuddin, his elder brother in his place. With this purpose he had already deputed the Sindhia and Holkar to bring him from Delhi[13] Thus Poona was defenceless, the Peshwa absent, and some of his own men disaffected when Tara Bai chose to try her coup.

Tara Bai's Coup Ends in a Failure

She urged the Pratinidhi and the Pant Sachiv to help her, and sent emissaries to Ramdas Pant, Dewan of Salabat Jang, to induce him to advance with the Nizam's army. Simultaneously she asked Uma Bai Dabhade to send an army immediately under Damaji Gaikwad. While she was sending for armies from the north and south she did not remain idle at Satara. " She increased the garrison of Satara by five thousand men, placed a strong contingent on the summit of Yeoteshwar hill, and garrisoned other strong places in the neighbourhood of the fort.'[14] But no help came from the south, and the Pratinidhi and Pant Sachiv did not espouse the cause of Tara Bai because of their sad experiences on previous occasions.[15] The only ally left was Uma Bai Dabhade, and she sent her agent and commander-in-Chief Damaji Gaikwad, at the head of fifteen thousand troops to the assistance of Tara Bai. Damaji advanced rapidly towards Poona, and on the 8th March, 1751, encamped at Kendur, where he was joined by Yashwant Rao Dabhade with his mother Uma Bai. Moving on, the Gujrat army halted on the 11th at Pangaon about thirty miles east of Poona. The news of its approach had spread panic in Poona, and on the 8th Radha Bai and Kashi Bai, Peshwa's grandmother and mother, had fled from Poona to Sinhagad. At this crisis, however, came the Purandare brothers to the rescue of the

[12] Sardesai, Vol. II, pp. 256-57.
[13] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 119.
[14] Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. III, p. 3.
[15] *Rajwade*, Vol. II, p. 120.

Peshwa. Mahadaji Purandare, who is alleged to have had an ill-will against Nana Saheb, rose above his personal feelings and courageously faced the situation. In consultation with the Peshwa's mutaliq, Bawa Fadnavis at Poona, he wrote a stern letter to Damaji reprimanding him for his treacherous move and commanding him to go back. This letter seemed to have chilled the enthusiasm of Damaji who turned from the direction of Poona and proceeded towards Satara. For once Poona was saved by the device of the Purandare.

If Mahadaji Purandare saved Poona, his brother Nana or Trimbak Rao Purandare saved Satara. As Damaji approached Satara, Tara Bai ordered the Havildar of the fort of Satara to point the guns at the houses of the partisans of the Peshwa in the town. Thereupon Nana Purandare, Govind Rao Chitnis, and other officers who did not know of the march of Gaikwad, were taken by surprise and fled away. They assembled an army at the village of Arla on the banks of the Krishna, and as they advanced to meet Damaji they were joined by Balwant Rao Mehandale and Bapuji Retharekar, their combined army now mustering about twenty thousand strong. But even in spite of superior numbers, they fought an indecisive action and retired on Nimb, where Damaji followed them and defeated them in an engagement. Flushed with victory Damaji went to Satara to pay his respects to Tara Bai, who gave him a warm reception. The news of the victory at Nimb and the presence of Gaikwar in Satara led to the surrender of several of the neighbouring forts. When thus to all appearances Tara Bai's cause seemed triumphant, came reverses one after another in quick succession.

Trimbak Rao Purandare who had been smarting under the humiliation of a defeat soon gathered fresh troops and led them to attack the enemy on the 15th of March. This time he more than amply redeemed his honour, and having defeated Gaikwad on the banks of the Yena forced him to retreat towards the valley of the Krishna, beyond the beautiful town of Wai.[16] A few miles to the west of the town lies the source of the Krishna buried amidst the hills of perpetual verdure. "As the traveller advances westwards up the valley, it narrows ; the river grows

16 *Life of Nana Saheb* by Sardesai, pp. 102-103.

smaller and the hills on either side become wilder and the forests on them thicker. At last the gorge ends in a blind alley, blocked by a ridge a thousand feet high which divides the Konkan from the Deccan plateau."[17] Into this blind alley Gaikwad was driven, till at last he could retreat no more. In his rear beyond the ridge the governor of the Konkan had mustered strong and held the country in Peshwa's interest. But yet there was one way out of this trap. Across the Mahabaleshwar plateau, lay, the fort of Yoteshwar, strongly garrisoned by Tara Bai's troops. These might come to his rescue ; but before they could make a move arrived suddenly the Peshwa in between them and Gaikwad. The Peshwa had received the news of Tara Bai's manoeuvres while encamped on the Krishna in Nizam's dominion, and as he moved north, he got the news of Purandare's victory at Nizamkonda. On the 24th April he was at Satara, covering 400 miles in thirteen days. From Satara he marched on Yoteshwar and stormed it, and then went to meet Damaji. Damaji, taken on all sides, lost heart and opened overtures for peace. The Peshwa granted his request, and invited him to encamp near him so that a settlement may be amicably and leisurely reached. When Damaji had been lured into this sense of safety and amity Nana Saheb made a demand for the cession of half of Gujrat and for the payment of twenty-five lakhs as an indemnity. But " Damaji represented that he was but the Mootaliq of Dhabaray, the Senaputee and had no authority for complying with what was required."[18] Since Damaji would not yield the Peshwa resorted to force, and on the 30th April attacked his camp unawares. His troops were dispersed and he, with his elder brother and son, Uma Bai and Yashwant Rao Dabhade, were all taken prisoner. On account of this treachery it is said Damaji ever afterwards refused to salute the Peshwa, except with his left hand. The prisoners were all sent to Poona, while the Peshwa started for Satara to make a settlement with Tara Bai.

[17] Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. III, p. 5.
[18] Grant Duff, Vol. II, p. 49.

Nana Saheb besieges Tara Bai in the Fort of Satara

But Tara Bai was still obdurate. Her strength lay in the fortress of Satara, which was well garrisoned, well provisioned, and well-nigh impregnable. The Peshwa invested it by 3rd of May, but there was hardly any possibility of its fall before the rainy season. Tara Bai chafed a good deal at the close investment of the Peshwa, and directed him to raise the siege and then open overtures with her. From the attitude of Tara Bai, the Peshwa saw that it was idle to hope for a positive settlement in the near future. So he took effective measures to stop her further intrigues, stationed a strong army of five to ten thousand men at Satara, and another at Chandan-Wandan, and then left for Poona where he had to deal with the Dabhades and Gaikwads. The Peshwa had sincerely desired to free Ramraja from the clutches of Tara Bai, and in fact that was the anxiety of all the Maratha people at the time. They used to listen with a pity to all the galling tyrannies of Tara Bai, who would frequently rave at him, abuse him to his face and would call him an impostor in the presence of all.[19] To the Peshwa surely it appeared both unmanly and indecent to let the poor Ramraja suffer in silence. When the Peshwa, it is said, began the siege of Satara Tara Bai induced Ramraja to issue an order to dismiss the Peshwa. Since Ramraja would not, Tara Bai locked him up " in a damp, cold dungeon " where he was kept on the coarsest fare and was reduced to a miserable plight. After the Peshwa returned to Poona he made many an attempt to effect his release and on the 11th of June, 1751, he wrote to his agent with Tara Bai, by name Dinkar Mahadeo, " It is my determination to effect the release of the king either by force or by amicable means. One must work for him, whose servant one has agreed to be."[20] Further in the same letter he writes that it is his sincere desire that the king should come out of the prison and rule happily over the state. At any rate all his earnestness and anxiety were of no avail to Ramraja.

19 Sardesai, Vol. II, p. 270.
20 *Rajwade*, Vol. III, p. 120.

Agreement between Nana Saheb and Damaji

Returning to Poona Nana Saheb tried to bring the Gaikwad to agree to his proposals but more than two months passed, and yet he was as stubborn as ever. He made his confinement more rigorous, but with no better results. In November the Peshwa was in a difficult situation, for there came the news that the Nizam Salabat Jang was marching on Poona.[21] Therefore he removed him and his Diwan to the fortress of Lohgad on the 14th November, 1751. A little later Damaji's Diwan escaped in disguise and went to Gujrat where he raised an insurrection against the Peshwa. This made the Peshwa relentless and he ordered Gaikwad to be put in chains. Gujrat troubles were, however, quelled by Raghunath Rao, and the rigorous confinement soon broke the spirit of Damaji. In March 1752 he yielded and agreed to abandon the cause of the Dabhades. An agreement was drawn up according to which he ceded half of Gujrat and of all his future conquests, and promised to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 5,25,000 to clear the arrear of Rs. 15,00,000, to maintain a contingent of ten thousand horse for the service of the Peshwa and to pay a sumptuous pension to the Dabhades. On his part the Peshwa promised to drive out the Mughals from Gujrat, put him in possession of Ahmedabad, and conferred on him the dignified title of Sena-Khas-Khel. Thus ended the Dabhade episode in favour of the Peshwa. Uma Bai died on the 28th November, 1753, and her son Yashwant Rao on the 18th May, 1754, humiliated and divested of all their power and possession. The house was completely ruined and on its ruins rose the house of Gaikwad.

Agreement between Tara Bai and Nana Saheb

In the meantime Tara Bai also relaxed her stubborn attitude towards the Peshwa, when she found that her only partisan Gaikwad had completely been worsted and two strong detachments had been posted at Satara and Chandan Wandan to keep watch on her. She fully realized now that she could not any longer intrigue successfully against the Peshwa. If she had found other partisans perhaps she would have held out, but since, none could be found, and since the Peshwa was

[21] Sardesai, Vol. II, p. 282.

endeavouring all the while to make up matters by amicable means she chose to bend before the storm. On the condition of the Peshwa's acceding to her terms she promised that she would not act against his wishes. Accordingly an agreement was drawn up, containing the conditions of Tara Bai, and the extent of the Peshwa's agreement thereto. The document, however, is not of much importance, as it was honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

Ramraja, an Impostor

When the Peshwa tried to release the king by sowing sedition among the officers of the fort, Tara Bai put their leader Anandrao Jadhav to death. But this sort of unpleasantness could not continue long and Tara Bai determined to evacuate the fort, came down into Fatteh Singh's palace on the 13th October, 1751. If Tara Bai renounced the fort to the Peshwa she had no intention of renouncing the charge of Ramraja to him. The Peshwa from his side did not put pressure on her because it was a critical time for him. The Nizam was coming to attack Poona and the Peshwa had the need of all his pluck to keep the old beldame in good humour. Tara Bai true to her words actually sent Jagjiwan Pratinidhi to the assistance of the Peshwa. The latter, however, suspected some treacherous move on the part of Tara Bai in sending the Pratinidhi to his help, and dreaded lest he should desert to the side of the Nizam. At any rate, nothing dangerous came to pass and early next year, i.e., 1752, Tara Bai went to Poona, at the request of the Peshwa. There they met and promised to abide by the agreement already reached. But Tara Bai insisted on the Peshwa's taking an oath in the holy temple of Jejuri to act according to it while the Peshwa insisted on Tara Bai's dismissing Babu Rao Jadhav from her service. This Jadhav, the Peshwa hated, and he was her chief agent at this time. Then the parties went to Jejuri where stands the temple dedicated to Khandoba. On the 14th September, 1752, they swore in the presence of the idol that they would act according to their agreement. There amidst the sacred surroundings Tara Bai declared in all seriousness that Ramraja was not her real grandson and that he was a mere Gondhali (itinerant ballad-singer) and an impostor. Therefore she requested him to get Sambhaji from Kolhapur and

set him up on the throne. Indeed this declaration of Tara Bai, set Nana Saheb to thinking and he felt inclined with her to arrange for the succession of Sambhaji to the throne of Satara. Whether it was likely to succeed or not, Tara Bai and Nana Saheb, now learnt to respect the wishes of each other and remained good friends till the death of Tara Bai. The Peshwa left Ramraja in her charge and did not try for his release perhaps because he could no longer feel the same respect for him as before since he heard that he was a Gondhali.

Results of the Peshwa's Agreement

Thus ended an affair that was fraught with consequences for Maharastra. The solemn declaration of Tara Bai that Ramraja was a Gondhali and an impostor left little respect in the mind of the Peshwa for the king. It came as a crowning incident to his victories over Tara Bai, Dabhade, Gaikwad, Pratinidhi and the Pant Sachiv. He had reduced to nonentity all the leading ministers and the chieftains. There had remained only the king, who was superior to him, if not in power, at least in prestige, and dignity. With the declaration that the Chhatrapati was an impostor he lost the prestige of his position, and what the Chhatrapati lost the Peshwa immediately gained. Already the power had been seized and Shahu had entrusted the government to him, so that after Ramraja ascended the throne he was pensioned off and the Peshwa determined to carry on the government in his place. Now since the king was illegitimate, and Peshwa's adversaries were either destroyed, reduced or reconciled, the Peshwa found no difficulty in rising to headship of the state both in name and in fact. There was a Chhatrapati always in Satara, but his dominions were conterminous with, and his authority was confined to, the walls of the fort. The Peshwa both ruled and governed, and hence the Chhatrapati was relegated to the background and remained as a figurehead. His usefulness was only recognised at the time of the accession of a new Peshwa, when he was required to send clothes of investiture to Poona.

This incident marks the completion of the rise of the Peshwas. Their rise covers a period of about forty years from the time of Balaji Vishwanath's appointment to the office to the


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18
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Muhammedabad
Kaira
Dakore
Neriad
Umreth
Pitlaud
Wankaner
Cambay
Durmuj
BARODA
Jhabua
Dewas
Dhar
Indore
Gopalpur
Rampur
Udepur
Rajpur
Narbada R.
Hindia
Jambusahr
Dabhai
Champaner
Narbada R.
Broach
Nandode
Bijagarh
Tapti R.
Bhaunagar
Rajpipla
Sultanpur
Rattanpur
Asirgarh
SURAT
Tapti R.
Nundurbar
Burhanpur
Suchin
Songarh
Amalner
Jahanabad
Ellichpur
NAGPUR
Nousari
Nowapura
Changdwy
Jalgaon
Gundavi
Dhulia
Bahadurpur
Nasirabad
Edlabad
Purna R.
Amraoti
Umrer
Chikli
Muther
Malkapur
Akola
Ahti
Hinganghat
Parneira
Sather
Pahur
Balapur
Nandgaon
Dahigam
Daman
Dharampur
Ajanta
Amirpur
Patur
Karanja
Chandore
Alegaon
Wardha R.
Fathepur
Huosenabad
Jafferabad
Baolm
Dahanu
Gaimbhirgarh
Vinchur
Tarapur
Nasik
Kopergaon
Daulatabad
Chanda
Jawhar
Trimbuck
Aurangabad
Mahur
Idulabad
Mahim
Asiri
Makoly
Paira R.
Manikdrug
Basoe.n
Jaiwar
Paithan
Dharavi
Bhewndi
Tasgaon
Rohri
Godavari
Thana
Kalyan
Junner
Nandere
Godavari R.
Belapur
Ahmadnagar
BOMBAY
Badlapur
Ranjangaon
Ashti
Bhir
Panwel
Chaus
Mandangaon
Penn
Wargaon
Tikona
Korugaon
Rajapur
Dharur
Chaul
Tallygaon
Chmargunai
Khardla
Tung
Nagotna
POONA
Manjera R.
Danda Rajpuri
Ashtumini
Sasur
Supa
Parinda
Janjira
Gossala
Jejury
Basi
Tierna R.
Manjera R.
Shriwardhana
Tala
Bhor
Baramali
Indapur
Pungaon
Dasgaon
Mhar
Wardungarh
Ashtah
Naldrug
Kallian
Bidar
Khed
Chundan
Koragaon
Sholapur
Dabul
Wassola
Kutlao
Pandarpur
Akalkote
Satara
Anjanwel
Rehmalpur
Brunhapuri
Vijaygarh
Chiploon
Turgaon
HYDERABAD
Goelkot
Masur
Gulbarga
Jaigarh
Wasantgarh
Khanapur
Sangmeshwar
Bhopalgarh
Tasgaon
Dullapur
Ratnagiri
Khed
Machundargarh
Vishalgarh
Mulkapur
Miraj
Bijapur
Wakinkerah
Rayapur
Amarabad
Vijaydurg
Karikalan
Talikota
Kistna R.
Deogarh
Byrugarh
Ghataprabha R.
Raichur
Ramgarh
Rangna
Gokauk
Bennur
Kistnah
Malwan
Malaprabha R.
Mudgal
Tungabhadra R.
Sawant Wari
Kurnool
Vingoorla
Belgaum
Toorgal
Gujandergarh
Adoni
Rairi
GOA
Dharwar
Gadag
Bijanagar
Hobli
Kopal
Guti
Ponda
GUJRAT
MALWA
KHANDESH
AURANGABAD
BERAR
BIDAR
HYDERABAD
BIJAPUR
ARABIAN SEA
Kanhan R.
Wainganga
Pranhita
Pain Ganga
Purna R.
Arun R.
Man R.
Pench R.

year 1752. Afterwards their power and possessions increased and in the year 1758 Raghunath Rao fulfilled the promise of Baji Rao by planting the Maratha banner on the walls of Attock. But that proved fatal to them. Encroachment as it was—the invasion of the Punjab, it was suicidal from the very outset. They had offended the Rajputs by plundering and levying contributions on them ; they had offended the Jats and Rohillas ; they had alienated the Emperor, the Wazir and Shuja-ud-Doula, and to crown all, there was no love lost between Sindhia and Holkar. With such antecedents they wanted to conquer the Punjab in the teeth of the opposition of Ahmad Shah Durani. The inevitable result was the fatal defeat at Panipat. It concerned the Peshwa more than any one else. No real conquests were made by the Peshwa after the year 1752 and his territories did not extend beyond Bundelkhand and Gwalior in the north and the Karnatic as far as the Tungabhadra in the south. Though the Doab and the Punjab were overrun between 1752 and 1758, the Peshwa never conquered them, and had to pay dearly for them. Both in power and in possession the Peshwas reached their climax by the year 1752. Panipat was the first shock to their power, and after Panipat, the north gradually fell under the domination of Sindhia and Holkar, who starting their career as the servants of the Peshwas, became independent of them, and indeed became more powerful than their master.

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